

BETHEL SEMINARY LIBRARY

REG

220.13 E68

Ericson, Wil

Inspiration history, theor



3 0513 0011 2480 5

ATION
HISTORY, THEORIES
AND FACTS

2

WILLIAM ALBERT ERICSON

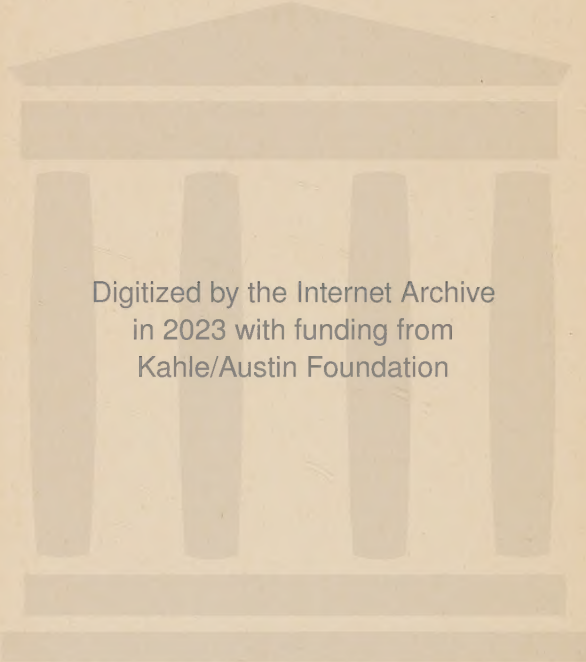
*THIS BOOK IS A GIFT
FROM THE LIBRARY OF*



*CLARENCE B. BASS, Ph.D.
PROFESSOR OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY
BETHEL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA, USA,
FOR THIRTY-THREE YEARS
1955-1988.*

The author of this volume, INSPIRATION, HISTORY, THEORIES AND FACTS, William Albert Ericson is a graduate of Augustana Theological Seminary. For years he has been an important contributor to pastoral, educational and theological work. He has done a most important work in preparing this masterly volume. Its scholarly treatment and logical conclusions make it an important contribution to great doctrines.

p. 51-



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2023 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation

INSPIRATION HISTORY, THEORIES and FACTS

BY
WILLIAM ALBERT ERICSON



AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY
SEVEN WEST FORTY-FIFTH STREET
NEW YORK

COPYRIGHT, 1928
BY
AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY

To My Wife

ANNA ALMQUIST ERICSON

PREFACE

The purpose of this little book is to glorify God, Who in His grace has granted the writer the privilege to sit at the feet of many noble teachers, to company with the thoughts of many mighty men throughout the ages, to sympathize with friend and foe, to see the truth, at least to some extent, when mixed with error, and, above all this, to believe that the Bible is the Word of God.

With this message goes the prayer that God may use it to strengthen the faith of some fellow-traveler to believe implicitly in the Inspired Word of God, that together our love in the Lord might increase and our service be made more efficient as we journey through life, confident in the hope of His Glory.

W. ALBERT ERICSON

CONTENTS

PAGE

PART I

History of the Doctrine of Inspiration 11

PART II

Theories of Inspiration 39

PART III

Facts of Inspiration 65

PART IV

Alleged Discrepancies Examined . . . 95

Bibliography 131

PART I

HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF INSPIRATION

PART I

HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF INSPIRATION

General Definition.

Inspiration is defined as “a supernatural divine influence on the Prophets, Apostles, or sacred writers, by which they were qualified to communicate truth without error; a supernatural influence which qualifies men to receive and communicate divine truth; also the truth so communicated.”*

Historical Background Essential.

In order to get a correct conception of the various theories of Inspiration, it is necessary to consider the history of the development of the doctrine of Inspiration. In giving a brief history of this development use is made of the

* Webster's New International.

general divisions of Church History, particularly for the New Testament times.

For our purpose direct quotations from theologians, wise or otherwise, are deemed to be of greater value than general statements of prevalent ideas.

HISTORY

Jewish Conception.

The law was acknowledged as given by God Himself through Moses, hence it was the binding rule of life. From the days of Ezra this was "a self-evident assumption to every Israelite." The whole Pentateuch was regarded as dictated by God and prompted by the Holy Spirit. "He who asserts that the Torah is not from heaven has no part in the future world." And further we read, "He who says that Moses wrote even one verse of his own knowledge is a denier and despiser of the Word of God."

Soon the writings of the Prophets and the works on the pre-exilian history of Israel were regarded with similar authority. Josephus informs us that the Jew regarded only twenty-two

books as divine. Schurer says: "It cannot be proved of other books than those of our present canon, that they were ever reckoned canonical by the Palestinian Jews." According to Philo every word of Holy Scripture by Moses is a divine declaration and there is no word without a definite meaning. "The Scriptures also of the other prophets in conjunction with those of Moses contain divine revelations. For all the Prophets are God's interpreters, Who makes use of them as instruments for the revelation of the Divine Will."

Sub-Apostolic Fathers.

The Jews generally believed in the verbal inspiration of the Old Testament canon, before the New Testament canon was completed, "at a time when the living source of prophecy had ceased to operate." Hagenbach in his History of Doctrine says: "That the Prophets and Apostles taught under the influence of the Holy Spirit, was the general belief of the ancient church, and had its foundation in the testimony of Scripture itself."

We do not need to rely on general statements made by modern men for our information regarding ancient ideas of inspiration. True, a

number of theories of inspiration are of quite modern origin; but we find expressions regarding the origin and nature of the Word of God, we see seeds from which developed the modern theories of inspiration.

JOHN THE PRESBYTER, is quoted as saying regarding Mark and his Gospel that "He wrote it with great accuracy, as Peter's interpreter. * * * He committed no mistake when he wrote down things as he remembered them. He was very careful to omit nothing of what he had heard, and to say nothing false in what he related."

BARNABAS says: "The Prophets received their gift from Christ and spake of Him," and "Moses spake in the Spirit."

CLEMENT OF ROME admonishes his readers to "Look carefully into the Scriptures, which are the true (utterances) of the Holy Spirit." The Apostles were sent forth to preach the kingdom of God "with the full assurance and measure of the Holy Spirit, when they had received the promises, and been fully convinced by the Resurrection, and confirmed in the Word of God."

POLYCARP asserts that "He is the first-born

of Satan whoever perverts the oracles of the Lord to suit his own passions, and says that there is neither resurrection nor judgment."

IGNATIUS teaches that the Prophets were inspired by the grace of Jesus Christ. "He was the subject of their preaching, and the Gospel is the perfection of immortality."

PAPIAS, a contemporary of Polycarp, "is the first writer who distinctly recognizes the synoptic Gospels." He composed "An exposition of the oracles of the Lord."

Several other writings from this time, some of them of uncertain origin, give evidence of the belief of the early Church in the real existence of the gift of Inspiration.

Age of Apologetics. (80 A.D.-254 A.D.)

Justin Martyr informs us that "We must not suppose that the language proceeds from the men who are inspired, but from the Divine Word which moved them. Their work is to announce that which the Holy Spirit, descending upon them, purposes, through them, to teach those who wish to learn the true religion. * * * For neither by nature nor human thought can men recognize such great and divine truths, but by

the gift that came down from above upon the holy men, who needed no art of words, nor skill in captious and contentious speaking, but only to offer themselves in purity to the operation of the Divine Spirit, in order that the divine power of itself might reveal to us the knowledge of divine and heavenly things."

ATHENAGORAS, speaking of the Prophets, says that "While entranced and deprived of their natural powers of reason by the influence of the Divine Spirit, they uttered that which was wrought in them, The Spirit using them as its instruments;" hence Christians, give "no heed to the doctrines of men, but those uttered and taught by God."

According to THEOPHILUS, "The inspired writers were not mere mechanical organs, but men who, coincidently with the divine influence, displayed a personal and moral fitness for their work." He says: "The Christians alone have received the truth, inasmuch as they are taught by the Holy Spirit, who spake by the holy Prophets." * * * so that "the words of the Prophets are the words of God," and "the contents of the Prophets and of the Gospels are found to be consistent, because all the writers spake by the inspiration of the one Spirit of God."

IRANAEUS tells us that "The Apostles, by the will of God, have consigned the Gospel in the Scriptures to be the ground and pillar of our faith * * * and by them we have learned the truth, that is the doctrine of the Son of God. * * * For after that our Lord rose from the dead, and they were clothed with the power of the Spirit from on high, they were filled with a perfect knowledge in all things." Therefore, "they are beyond all falsehood" although they speak "according to the capacity of their hearers, talking blindly to the blind." The truth is not, however, impaired by the human agent, nor "the significance of the words destroyed." "The Scriptures are perfect, inasmuch as they were uttered (*dictae*) by the Word of God and His spirit, though we want the knowledge of their mysteries" for "nothing is empty or without meaning in the dealings of God." While the connection of its different parts may appear perplexing to us, "all Scripture, as it has been given to us by God, will be found to be harmonious."

A fragment sometimes attributed to CAIUS says concerning those who fearlessly "laid their hands on divine Scriptures" that their error is so great that it "cannot be unknown even to themselves; for either they do not believe that the divine Scriptures were spoken by the Holy

Spirit, and are unbelievers; or they hold themselves wiser than the Holy Spirit, and we must say they rave."

From FRAGM. DE CANONE we read concerning the Gospels that "Though various elements are inculcated in each, still the faith of believers differs not, since everything concerning the Nativity and Passion (of Christ) is declared in all of them by one and the self-same guiding Spirit."

According to NOVATIAN "The Prophets and Apostles were inspired by one and the self-same Spirit, still on the former He came but for a time (ad momentum) while He abode with the latter always. To one some degree of His influence was vouchsafed; on the other His whole energy was poured."

HYPPOLYTUS of Portus says: "The Law and the Prophets were from God, Who in giving them compelled His messenger to speak by the Holy Spirit, that receiving the inspiration of the Father's power they may announce the Father's counsel and will."

TERTULLIAN "maintained alike the Inspiration of the Old and New Testament Scriptures." "To him prophecies are the voice of the Lord" and "the revelation of the Apostles is the revela-

tion of Christ." He says: "God sent forth, from the first, men who, by their justice and innocence, were worthy to know God and make Him known, and filled them to overflowing with the Divine Spirit," and thus "gave us a written Testament."

CYPRIAN speaks of the "Divine Scriptures" as the "foundation of our hope, the bulwark of our faith, the support of our hearts, the guide of our path, the safeguard of our salvation." In his writings he often states that the Holy Spirit spake by the Prophets, Apostles and Evangelists in the Law and in the Gospel. He says: "The Gospel cannot stand in part and fall in part."

CLEMENS of Alexandria, in his doctrine of the plenary Inspiration of the Scripture, is rigid in form and wide in application. Not one tittle of the Scripture shall pass away without being accomplished; "for the mouth of the Lord, the Holy Spirit, spoke it. * * * There is no discord between the Law and the Gospel, but harmony, for they both proceed from the same Author, differing in name and time to suit the age and culture of their hearers." "The Scriptures are truly holy, for they are writings which make us holy and make us godlike; and of these holy writings and words the Bible is composed,"

which Paul, "calls inspired by God, being useful for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

ORIGEN has been called the father of orthodoxy and the father of heresy, the friend and teacher of saints, while his own salvation was questioned and denied. He says: "Truly, it is most evidently preached in the Churches that the Holy Spirit was present in those of old time as in those who were inspired at the coming of Christ. * * * There is nothing, whether in the law or in the Prophets, in the Evangelists or in the Apostles, which does not descend from the fulness of the Divine Majesty. * * * We cannot say of the writings of the Holy Spirit that anything in them is otiose or superfluous, even if they seem to some obscure." There is not "one jot or tittle written in the Scriptures which does not work its own work, when men know how to employ it." But he claims that "some Scriptures have not the corporeal, so that in such cases we must seek alone the soul and the spirit." "Whoever carefully examines the question will find countless * * * incidents in the Gospels, not literally true (but true in idea), inwrought into those narratives which are to be received according to the letter." He abandons the literal sense only when he considers it

“self-contradictory, useless, or unworthy of God; he accepts all the Bible, and feels bound to give an intelligible reason for his faith; he faces difficulties which many do not choose to see, and proposes a solution, which only exhibits his veneration for Holy Scripture.”

WESTCOTT, to whom we are indebted for much of the historical material on the early doctrine of Inspiration, offers the following conclusions concerning the opinions of the early Fathers: “They teach us that inspiration is an operation of the Holy Spirit acting through men, according to the laws of their constitution, which is not neutralized by His influence, but adopted as a vehicle for the full expression of the Divine Message. * * * They teach us that Christ—the Word of God—speaks from first to last; that all Scripture is permanently fitted for our instruction; that a true spiritual meaning, eternal and absolute, lies beneath historical and ceremonial and moral details.”

Age of Polemics. (254 A.D.-730 A.D.)

CHRYSTOSTOM designates the words of the Apostles as the words of the Holy Spirit and calls the mouth of the Prophets the mouth of God; still he is quoted as saying regarding Acts

XXVI, 6: "Here Paul speaks humanly, and does not throughout enjoy grace, but is permitted to intermix even his own materials."

AUGUSTINE likens the Apostles to hands that wrote what Christ, the Head, dictated. Although he understands all biblical narratives in a strictly historical and literal sense, he leaves ample room for allegorical interpretation. He says that the truth is not bound to the words and that the "language of the evangelists might be ever so different, provided their thoughts were the same."

GREGORY THE GREAT, in speaking of the authorship of the book of Job, says that it is not necessary to know the pen with which the King of Kings has written His royal letter, but it is sufficient to have a full conviction of its Divine contents.

THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA assumed different degrees of inspiration. To Solomon he ascribed only the gift of wisdom, not that of prophecy. Job and the Song of Solomon were judged only from a human viewpoint.

EPIPHANIUS opposed very decidedly the idea that the inspired writers were entirely passive. He supposed that "the Prophets enjoyed

a clear perception of the Divine, a calm disposition of mind, etc.”

JEROME allows “that human (e.g. grammatical) faults might have occurred,” yet he guards himself against any dangerous inferences which might be drawn from his premises. * * * According to him the Divine power of the word itself destroyed these apparent blemishes, or caused believers to overlook them.

The conclusion concerning the ideas of these Fathers is summarized by Rudelbach in the following words: “The opinion of these theologians manifestly was, that the external phenomena do not preclude the reality of the highest effects of Divine grace.”

Age of Scholasticism (730 A.D.-1517 A.D.)

While AGOBARD asserts that the sacred penmen had not always adhered to the rules of grammar, he maintains that “The dignity of the Word of God consists in the force of meaning, not in the pomp of words * * * that the authority of the Apostles and the Prophets remains intact, and that no one is permitted to believe that they could have placed a letter otherwise than they have done; for their authority is stronger than heaven and earth.”

EUTHYMIUS ZIGABENUS did not hesitate to speak of the discrepancies in the different evangelists. He attributed these to the fact that they wrote a considerable time after the events in the life of Christ actually happened and therefore did not recollect very exactly what happened.

Semler tells us that an extraordinary and direct inspiration was ascribed to THOMAS AQUINAS and DUNS SCOTUS when the accounts of frequent appearances and visits on the part of God, as well as other blessed and holy beings were generally believed.

HUGO supposed that the sacred writers drew from their own resources in some instances. He distinguishes between the Divine and the purely human in certain portions of the Scriptures. He remarks concerning Obadiah that "He combines profound ideas with a plain style, and is sparing in words, but rich in thoughts."

According to SAVONAROLA, the Scriptures are inspired by God, but he held that the gospels were written in the hearts of men by the Holy Ghost. God did not use the writers as instruments, but allowed women to talk as women and shepherds as shepherds. He did not limit

inspiration to the Sacred Scriptures. He claimed to have the gift himself.

Although the scholastic divines endeavored to define more precisely the idea of Inspiration, their definitions are rather scanty. They assumed that this doctrine needed no further proof, since the whole Church moved in this element. Previous notions still prevailed, although we find the beginning of a distinction between **revelatio** and **assistentia**.

Age of Symbolik (1517 A.D.-1720 A.D.)

LUTHER is quoted by supporters of various theories prevalent today. A liberal modern theologian says that Scripture was for Luther "the inspired word of God * * *" and "in the strife of opinions (he) made Scripture an absolute standard: even he at times speaks of Divine law." And then in order to support his own theory of individual reasoned judgment, he quotes the following sentence from Luther: "Everyone must believe solely on this account, namely, that it is God's word, and that he inwardly finds it to be truth." Luther says: "To sum up all, the Holy Bible is the most excellent and best book of God, full of comfort in all temptations; concerning faith, hope, and love,

it teaches very different things from those which reason can see and feel, comprehend and experience, and in adversities it teaches how Christian virtues are to shine forth, and that there is another and eternal life beyond this poor and miserable one."

To ZWINGLI "the Word of God is perfect in itself, and revealed for the welfare of man; but he who neither loves it, nor understands it, nor will receive it, is sick."

CALVIN'S opinion was similar, although he held that a different form and style was not inconsistent with the Divine origin of the Bible. The sacred writers wrote only at the dictation of the Holy Ghost.

These three together with MELANCTHON all "speak in the strongest possible language of the divinity, credibility, and infallibility of the sacred writings."

The so-called Orthodox divines of this period developed the formal aspect of the **locus de Scriptura** in which there was a rigid adherence to the very letter of Scripture. Later writers carried this idea so far as to extend inspiration to the vowel-points and the punctuation. The **Formula Consensus Helvetici** declares that the

DOCTRINE OF INSPIRATION

Old Testament 'is **theopneustos**, equally as regards the consonants, the vowels, and the vowel-points, or at least their force.'"

JACOB BOHM said: "The living letter also, which is the independent and revealed word and nature of God, must, through the medium of the revealed word, be laid open and read in man, who is taught and instructed by the Holy Ghost himself."

WIEGEL declared that "Scripture, as such, is a dead letter, and an empty word, which sounds through the air," and it is not enough to say, such and such a writer "has possessed the Holy Spirit, therefore he cannot make a mistake. * * * It is God, God alone, who works faith, and imparts judgment to try the spirits and discern the writings."

CHRISTIAN HOBURG, speaking of the letter, says: "Scripture is an antiquated, cold and dead thing, which makes men mere pharisees."

ARND points out that God did not reveal His Holy Word that it might remain a dead letter, but to become a living power within us to create a new and spiritual nature. "The living Christ is the book which we must read, and from which we must learn."

SPENER agreed with the mystics that the dead letter can do nothing; but he opposed the "pre-eminence assigned to the spirit without the Scripture." Our feelings are not the norm of truth; divine truth is the norm of our feelings. This truth exists in the Word apart from ourselves.

The universities of Louvain and Douay condemned the teaching of the Jesuits—that it is not necessary to believe that the words of the Bible are inspired.

The Arminians and Socinians taught that "every passage is to be considered separately and in its historical limits."

COCCEIUS viewed the various books of the Bible as "connected parts of a greater whole, so that the one is reflected by the other."

BECKER said: "Reason must precede Scripture, because Scripture presupposes reason; I mean sound reason, to which Scripture must prove its divine origin. * * * Scripture is, nevertheless, above reason, not as lord and master (for either has its respective office) but because it possesses greater dignity and larger means. * * * Both remain, however, free, with this difference only, that reason, acknowledging its inferiority, always pays deference to Scripture."

DOCTRINE OF INSPIRATION

This is in line with the Socinian principle that revelation cannot contradict reason.

This period witnessed considerable development and also divisions of opinions regarding the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.

Age of Criticism (1720 A.D.)

We are told that STORR and others of the supra-naturalistic school resorted to artificial exegesis to overcome the apparent differences in the various accounts of the same events, etc., in order to uphold the verbal theory of inspiration. Others of the same school admit that the sacred writers wrote concerning non-religious things "according to the best of their knowledge and ability."

According to KANT'S "moral interpretation" Scriptures are to be explained apart from their original historical meaning, "in such a manner as is likely to prove useful to the moral condition of the people." His philosophy admits of neither the proof of the reality of miracles nor the denial of their possibility. Some rationalists resort to the natural interpretation of the miracles, others make them mere myths, which seems more agreeable to their negative tendency.

Hagenbach says: "In addition to the gram-

matico-historical system of interpretation which has been adopted by most modern commentators, GERMAR made use of the panharmonic, OLSHAUSEN and STIER of the allegorical mode of interpretation."

Gausсен classifies SCHLEIERMACHER and De WETTE with those who "reject all the miraculous inspiration, and are unwilling to attribute to the sacred writers any more than Cicero accorded to the poets—*afflatum spiritus divini*—‘a divine action of nature, an interior power resembling the other vital forces of nature!’" They both admitted mythical elements in Scriptures.

BILLROTH expresses himself as follows: "It is the object of systematic theology, to comprehend that which is truly rational, even the Spirit who has manifested himself in the Christian religion."

BENGEL and CRUSIUS attached great importance both to the prophecies and the types of the Old Testament. Some rationalists reject both.

SWEDENBORG has an idea regarding the origin and nature of the Word of God that is pretty much his own. He teaches that "the Word in its bosom is spiritual. Descending from Jehovah the Lord, and passing through the an-

gelic heavens, the Divine (in itself ineffable and imperceptible) became level with the perception of angels and finally the perception of man. Hence the Word has a spiritual sense, which is within the natural, just as the soul is in the body, or as thought is in speech, or volition in action."

We have yet to quote a few more men whose names are familiar in standard theological works.

HUTTER expresses himself in this manner: "Although God did not directly write the Scriptures, but used Prophets and Apostles as his pen and instrument, yet the Scripture is not, on that account, of any less authority. For it is God, and indeed God alone, who inspired the Prophets and Apostles, not only as they spoke, but also as they wrote; and He made use of their lips, their tongues, their hands, their pen. Therefore, or in this respect, the Scriptures also, as they are, were written by God Himself."

GERHARD: "The instrumental causes of Sacred Scripture were the holy men of God. * * * whom, therefore, we properly call the amanuenses of God, the hand of Christ, and the scribes and notaries of the Holy Spirit, since they neither spoke nor wrote by their own human will, but, borne along by the Holy Spirit, were

acted upon, led, driven, inspired, and governed by the Holy Spirit." And further he says: "The inducements to engage in writing brought to bear upon the Apostles from without, do not annul the internal command, but rather confirm it, since those circumstances were made to influence the Apostles by the wonderful arrangement of Divine Providence, and to them were subsequently added the interior impulse of the Holy Spirit, urged on by which they applied their hands to the work."

CALOVIVS remarks: "That all the particulars contained in the Sacred Scriptures are not, indeed, to be regarded as having been received by a peculiar and new revelation, but by the special dictation, inspiration, and suggestion of the Holy Spirit."

QUENSTEDT speaks as follows regarding the Canon, the so-called unimportant matter and the style: "All the canonical books, both of the Old and the New Testaments, were written by God, Who peculiarly incited and impelled the sacred writers to engage in the work, and, therefore, the Scriptures of the New Testament were recorded according to the commandment and will of God by the Evangelists and Apostles. * * *

A matter may be of small moment, considered

in itself and with reference to the estimation in which it is held by men, and yet of great importance if we regard the end and wise design which God has in view with regard to it. Many things in Scripture seem to be of small account (2 Tim. 4: 13) in regard to the end had in view (Rom. 15:4) and the all-wise design of God, in accordance with which these things were introduced into the Scriptures. * * * There is a great diversity among the sacred writers in regard to style and mode of speaking, which appears to arise from the fact that the Holy Spirit accommodated himself to the ordinary mode of speaking, leaving to each one his own manner; yet we do not thereby deny that the Holy Spirit suggested the particular words to these individuals."

CALOVIOUS says that "The Holy Spirit, supreme author of the Holy Scriptures, was not bound to the style of any one, but as a perfectly free teacher of languages, could use, through any person soever, the character, style, mode of speech that he chose * * * yet there may be recognized in it a condescension of the Holy Spirit; because he accommodated himself sometimes to the ordinary method of speaking, leaving to the writers their own style of speech; but it must not be denied that the Holy Spirit

breathed into them the words. * * * No error, even in unimportant matters, no defect of memory, not to say untruth, can have any place in all the Sacred Scriptures."

HOLLAZ is generally quoted extensively, and we must give him a hearing. "Theopneustia (inspiration) denotes as well the antecedent divine instigation or peculiar impulse of the will to engage in writing, as the immediate illumination by which the mind of the sacred writer is fully enlightened through the supernatural illumination of divine grace, and the conceptions of the things to be written are themselves suggested immediately by the Holy Spirit. * * * There are contained in Scripture historical, chronological, geneological, astronomical, natural-historical, and political matters, which, although the knowledge of them is not necessary to salvation, are nevertheless divinely revealed, because an acquaintance with them assists not a little in the interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures, and in illustrating the doctrines and moral precepts. If only the mysteries of faith which are contained in the Sacred Scriptures depend on divine inspiration, and all the rest, which may be known by the light of nature, depend merely upon divine direction, then the whole Scripture is not inspired. But Paul declares that the whole Scrip-

DOCTRINE OF INSPIRATION

ture is divinely inspired. Therefore not only the mysteries of the faith, but also the remaining truths that may be known by the light of nature, which are contained in Scripture, are divinely suggested and inspired. * * * The divine inspiration of the words known by common usage, was necessary to the proper expression of the mind of the Holy Spirit, * * * so that the prophets and apostles might commit the Sacred Scriptures to writing in the order and connection so graciously and excellently given and in which they would appear in perfect accordance with the mind of the Holy Spirit."

Sufficient Historical Background.

We deliberately refrain from coming closer to our own age in our attempt to establish an historical background for the various theories of inspiration. Many more men might have been quoted—good men and bad men. Possibly we have laid ourselves open to the criticism that not enough of the negative nature has been inserted in the background. We realize that in all ages there have been fools who have said in their hearts "There is no God!" These have rejected and ridiculed all ideas of divine inspiration. Such men do not deserve a hearing, and their opinions do not belong in our background. What has been said seems sufficient for our purpose.

Modern Theories Have Historical Roots.

As we peruse the pages of the history of the past we find germs, seeds and roots from which have sprung the modern theories—wise and otherwise—of inspiration. Facts and falsehoods are in evidence from the dawn of the days of doctrine unto the present day,

PART II
THEORIES OF INSPIRATION

PART II

THEORIES OF INSPIRATION

Definitions.

Many and varied are the definitions of Inspiration. We are forced to the conclusion that most men offer a definition that will fit their pet theory of Inspiration. Let us look at a few!

“Inspiration is the act or power of exercising an elevating or stimulating influence upon the intellect or emotions; the result of such influence; the influence which quickens or stimulates, as, the inspiration of occasion, of art, etc.”—Webster and others, using the term in a general sense.

“We understand, therefore, by inspiration—to sum up the matter—certain effects worked by the Spirit of God in the souls of the Prophets and the first witnesses of Christ, through which they were enabled to understand revelation—its

facts and its words—and make it intelligible.”—Seeberg.

“Inspiration, in the highest sense, is the immediate communication of knowledge to the human mind by the Spirit of God; but, as we have already observed, it is commonly used by divines, in a less strict and proper sense, to denote such a degree of divine influence, assistance, or guidance, as enabled the authors of the Scriptures to communicate religious knowledge to others, without error or mistake, whether the subjects of such communication were things then immediately revealed to those who declared them, or things with which they were before acquainted. When it is said that Scripture is divinely inspired, we are not to understand that the Almighty suggested every word, or dictated every expression.”—Horne.

“An extraordinary divine agency upon teachers while giving instruction, whether oral or written, by which they were taught what and how they should write or speak.”—Knapp, quoted in M’Clintock and Strong.

“Biblical inspiration is the personal influence of God which so guided all who took part in producing the Bible that they made a body of literature unique in religious value, and, so far

as we now see, final in religious teaching.”—Professor Wood.

“Inspiration enables its possessor to see and apprehend God and His will, and to impart to other men what he has himself seen and apprehended; but of any further power it confers it is precarious to make assertion.”—Marcus Dods.

“The inbreathing of God (Theos, Pneo) and the result of it.”—Pope.

“Divine inspiration is the mysterious power put forth by the Spirit of God on the authors of Holy Writ, to make them write it, to guide them even in the employment of the words they use, and thus to preserve them from all error.”—Gaussen.

“Divine inspiration was that agency by which God super-naturally communicated to the intellect of those who wrote, not only the correct conception of all that was to be written, but also the conception of the words themselves and of everything by which they were to be expressed, and by which He also instigated their will to the act of writing.”—Baier, quoted by Schmid.

Having wearied ourselves with human definitions, our soul still seems to say with Westcott: “The nature of its operation transcends the

power of our thought." Scriptures do not define "its nature, method of operation and limits." But the fact of Inspiration is everywhere in evidence to the believer. And from the Word of God we get our definite information about Inspiration.

Many Varieties.

There are many and varied theories of Inspiration in the world. There seems to be no generally accepted rule for classifying these theories. What makes it even worse is that one man will apply a certain name to a particular theory while another man will apply the same name to another theory. And again, different names will be applied to the same theory. This is particularly true when it comes to the use of the words, Mechanical, Verbal, Plenary and Dynamical as names for one or more theories.

Possibility of Classification.

There is, however, a possibility of classifying these theories under six headings so as to include them all. Some writers would probably object to be placed where we consider that they belong, because they have given their theory another name than the one under which it is classified.

But be it understood that we are seeking to classify theories and not names of theories. While it may be hard to know where a certain freakish theory belongs, we are satisfied that virtually all theories in existence are closely related to one or the other of the following groups: Natural, Universal, Partial, Degrees (Illumination) Mechanical, Plenary.*

Theories Examined.

It is our purpose to examine the various theories so as to see which one is the most tenable for a Christian, which one is Biblical. We assume that the testimony of the Word of God is of infinitely more value than the ordinary testimony of man.

Natural Inspiration.

According to the Natural theory of Inspiration "the Bible is a collection of documents written in good faith by intelligent and trustworthy men, whose work was indeed guided by the Holy Ghost, but only in the same sense as the work of every noble writer, be he poet or preacher, who has helped men to truer thoughts of religion and of God. It considers that every great poet is inspired, that every earnest thinker who has a

* We follow the general order used by Dr. Elliot.

message for his generation, is as much a prophet of the Highest as if his works were included within the covers of the Bible." Milton, Shakespeare, Plato, Bunyan would be classed with Isaiah, Paul and the rest of the Apostles. Their writings "exhibit only different manifestations of the Spirit of God."

Concerning the Bible writers it is claimed that "They only possessed in a higher degree a certain form of consciousness which in some degree belongs to all mankind, which is as wide as the world, as universal as God." The Prophets only had a deeper insight into the tendencies of the times. And so, "as Burke foretold the French Revolution, Isaiah foretold the captivity of the Jews." As the words of holy men of God today touch the hearts of men, so do the words of the Psalmist and the Apostles.

This theory comes dangerously near being a theory of non-inspiration. Theologians who have become so rationalistic that they affirm that the Scriptures are not Divinely inspired, in the ordinary sense of that expression, generally admit this form of inspiration, which is the lowest form of the various false theories of inspiration.

Those who consistently hold to the Natural theory of Inspiration will naturally regard Chris-

tianity "as one of the great religions of the world."

Verily, reason has become unreasonable! How can any man with ordinary intelligence claim that the Word of God is only a human production? Common sense will tell even the casual observer that the Bible is more than a man-made book.

Reason itself rebels against the unreasonableness of the Natural theory of Inspiration.

Universal Christian Inspiration.

The so-called Universal Christian Inspiration theory has at least this advantage over the Natural theory, that it is claimed to be a Christian experience. This theory "identifies the Inspiration of the Bible with the illumination common to every believer."

Such identification must come from those who themselves are not illuminated by the Spirit of God. It may seem salutary to the pride of the pharisee, but the sanctified soul knows full well that it does not possess the miraculous Divine Power which led the Bible writers to speak the Word of God.

The Sacred writers themselves knew that God

“brought” them to speak and that they were “borne by the Holy Spirit” to speak as this “Bearer” directed them to utter the Word of the Almighty. Let us listen to a few of them.

David says: “The spirit of Jehovah spake by me, and His word was upon my tongue.” (2 Sam. 23:2)

Isaiah tells us: “Jehovah spake thus to me with strength of hand, and instructed me.” (Is. 8:11)

Listen to Jeremiah: “Now the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee; I have appointed thee a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord Jehovah! behold I know not how to speak; for I am a child. But Jehovah said unto me, Say not, I am a child; for to whomsoever I shall send thee thou shalt go, and whatsoever I shall command thee thou shalt speak. * * * Then Jehovah put forth his hand, and touched my mouth; and Jehovah said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.” (Jer. 1: 4-9)

“I was no prophet,” cried Amos, “neither was I a prophet’s son, but I was a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore-trees; and Jehovah took me

from following the flock, and Jehovah said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel." (Ch. 7: 14-15)

Ezekiel explains his experience in these words: "So the Spirit lifted me up, and took me away; and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; and the hand of Jehovah was strong upon me." (Ch. 3: 14)

But why multiply examples? All the way through the Prophets' writings we hear "the word of the Lord," and are reminded of this fact by the words: "Thus saith the Lord."

Let us look at a few of the testimonies of the New Testament writers. Matthew tells us that "All this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the Prophet." (Ch. 1:22) Luke says: "God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets that have been from of old." (Acts 3: 21)

Paul asserts: "For I make known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel that was preached by me, that it is not after men. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation." He informs his readers that he himself speaks unto them "by the word of the Lord."

No matter how we twist or turn the translation of II Timothy 3: 16, we see in it that Paul believes in a special and supernatural inspiration.

No one who considers these testimonies from the sacred writers can conscientiously assert that they did not believe with Peter that, "No prophecy ever came by the will of man; but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." (II Peter 1: 21)

When we listen to the mysterious Voice in Biblical History, when we look at the Bible literature, when we hear again and again, "Thus saith the Lord," when we observe how predictions are fulfilled, and when we notice the "wonderful way in which all these separate, unconnected books, with centuries between them, form a complete and connected Bible," then we frankly admit that the Lord Himself must have directed the work and His Holy Spirit must have produced the Word.

We are forced to the conclusion that the Bible is not the product of common Christian endeavor. It is the Word of God, spoken through men moved by the Holy Ghost.

Partial Inspiration.

Partial Inspiration is the popular view of the

present day, with its watchword, "The Bible contains the Word of God." It is unpopular; it is old fashioned to believe that the Bible IS the Word of God. While divine inspiration is admitted, it is confined to parts or portions of the Scriptures.

There are those who claim that parts of the Bible are inspired; for example: The first and fourth of the four evangelists, a part of Moses, a part of Isaiah, a part of Daniel, a part of the Epistles, etc. These, it is claimed, are from God, the other parts are from man.

Others declare that inspiration is confined to the doctrinal portions of the Bible. One writer says: "All that it teaches about faith in God, in Christ, in righteousness, in moral love, in the wisdom of a life spent in the fear of God, has proved its absolute trustworthiness. And as trustworthy are its teachings as to where human life goes wrong, as to where the right way in all matters of conduct lies, as to how a life of righteousness may be attained, as to how manhood may be perfected in a life of likeness to God."

And there are yet others who claim that the sacred writers were inspired only when they wrote "things naturally unknown to them." It

is regarded as unreasonable to believe that they were inspired when they made use of material that was common property in their days.

Still another form of the theory of partial Inspiration is that the Ideas were inspired, while the words were not. The truth is Divine, the statement of the truth is human. The thoughts are from God; the words from man. It is said: "We must, in the light of just criticism, admit that the phraseology in which these statements is couched is oftentimes neither elegant nor exact. Yet this does not impair their essential truth, as the testimony of an illiterate witness may be scrupulously truthful, although confused in order and unscientific in form. Provided the facts are substantially given, the want of logical, rhetorical, and grammatical precision is comparatively unimportant, and forms not a ground for impeachment, etc." According to this idea, Scripture is the "mind of God elaborated by the understanding of man, to be promulgated in the words of man."

Let us begin our conclusion concerning this theory with the last form of it that we considered. Westcott's words are weighty. We shall let him speak. He speaks of the absolute impossibility of separating the letter and the spirit,

the "external and the internal, the historical and the doctrinal, the objective and the subjective, however we may choose to name them." He says: "The slightest consideration will show that words are as essential to intellectual processes as they are to mutual intercourse. For man the purely spiritual and absolute is but an aspiration or a dream. Thoughts are wedded to words as necessarily as soul to body. Language is a condition of our being, determining the conception as well as the communication of ideas, as in the first record of our race we read that Adam, while still in solitude, gave names to all the creatures that passed before him. Without it the mysteries unveiled before the eyes of the seer would be confused shadows; with it they are made clear lessons for human life."

Regarding what has been called unimportant matters in Scriptures, it has been well said that the line of demarcation between what is important to religion and what is not, is too fine to be traced by any expositor. If this is true, what shall we say about the modern teaching that every man must form his own "reasoned judgment" concerning what is fact and what is error, what is truth and what is falsehood, what is Divine and what is human in the Bible?

Neither the sacred writers, nor Christ, ever

intimate that there are parts of Scripture that are inspired and parts that are not. But we are told specifically by the Word of God that "every Scripture is inspired of God."

We are, therefore, compelled by the necessity of the case and the positive declaration of the Bible itself to maintain that not only parts, or portions, or ideas that we find in Scripture are inspired—all Scripture is Divinely inspired.

Different Degrees of Inspiration.

Concerning the class of men who hold that there are different degrees of inspiration in the Scriptures, Gaussen says: "(They) extend, it is true, the notion of a divine inspiration to all parts of the Bible, but not to all equally. Inspiration, as they understand it, might be universal indeed, but unequal; often imperfect, accompanied with innocent errors; and carried to very different degrees, according to the nature of the different passages; of which degrees they constitute themselves, more or less, the judges."

But it is evident that some who hold this theory believe that parts of the Bible are not inspired at all. In a passage quoted by Horne we find the following: "When it is said, that Scripture is divinely inspired, we are not to under-

THEORIES OF INSPIRATION

stand that the Almighty suggested every word, or dictated every expression. From the different styles in which the books are written, and from the different manner in which the same events are related and predicted by different authors, it appears that the sacred penmen were permitted to write as their several tempers, understandings, and habits of life, directed; and that the knowledge communicated to them by inspiration on the subject of their writings, was applied in the same manner as any knowledge acquired by other means. Nor is it to be supposed that they were even thus inspired in every fact that they related, or in every precept which they delivered. They were left to the common use of their faculties, and did not, upon every occasion, stand in need of supernatural communication; but whenever, and as far as divine assistance was necessary, it was always afforded."

This theory recognizes at least four sorts or degrees of inspiration, not counting the parts of the Bible that are regarded as non-inspired. They are given in different order by different writers.

Inspiration of *superintendency* "only produced correctness and accuracy in relating past occurrences, or in reciting the words of others;

and preserved the writers generally from relating anything derogatory to the revelation with which it was connected." In other words, they were preserved from making serious mistakes in that which relates to faith and life.

Inspiration of *elevation* has been explained as the divine assistance which "not only communicated ideas, new and unknown before, but also imparted greater strength and vigor to the efforts of the mind than the writer could otherwise have attained."

Under the Inspiration of *direction* the sacred writers are regarded to have been under a more powerful action of the Holy Spirit and hence under God's guidance in what they said, and what they refrained from saying.

Inspiration of *suggestion* has been termed "the highest form of divine assistance." According to this theory "The Prophets and Apostles received such communications of the Holy Spirit, as suggested and dictated minutely every part of the truth delivered."

In order that we should not be too worried in this wilderness, one writer seeks to comfort us with these words: "We may rest assured that one property belongs to every inspired writing,

namely, that it is free from error, that is, any material error." But the same writer informs us that some of the facts related and some of the precepts delivered were not inspired. Hence his words do not comfort

This theory of Inspiration by degrees only complicates matters. Is not the God who holds the destiny of the nations in the hollow of His hand able to lead one single man to say what He wants him to say? Isn't He who breathed His Spirit into the form of clay so that it became a living soul, able to lead that spirit to speak His Word according to His Will? Is it below the dignity of the Lord to speak of the common everyday things of life? Did not He who said: "Lazarus, come forth!" also ask "How many loaves have you?" We admit that inspiration may be more perceptible in some passages than in others, but that does not make it less real in one than in the other. Some words are of greater weight in a sentence than other words. But the prepositions and conjunctions are needed to complete the sense. John, Three, sixteen, may be of "greater importance" than some other passages, but it is not more inspired than the rest of the Bible. The God who made the mighty mountain also created the little grain of sand.

This division of the Scriptures into the inspired, the half-inspired and the uninspired is in direct opposition to the Scriptures. Man may say that this part is from man and that part is from God. The Word of God says: "Every Scripture is inspired of God."

"This fatal system of a gradual, imperfect and intermittent inspiration, has its origin in that misapprehension" on account of which people "view inspiration in the man" instead of seeing it where it belongs—in the Book.

We must make a distinction between illumination and inspiration. The first is susceptible of degrees, the second is not. "A prophet is more or less enlightened by God; but what he says is not more or less inspired. It is so, or it is not so; it is from God, or it is not from God; here there is neither measure nor degree, neither increase nor diminution. David was enlightened by God; John the Baptist more than David; a simple Christian possibly more than John the Baptist; an apostle was more enlightened than that Christian, and Jesus Christ more than that apostle. But the inspired word of David is that of God; as was that of John the Baptist, as was that of St. Paul, as was that of Jesus Christ! It is the Word of God. The most enlightened of the

THEORIES OF INSPIRATION

saints cannot speak by inspiration, whilst the most wicked, the most ignorant, and the most impure of men, may speak not of his own will (aph eautou ouk eipein) but by inspiration (alla propheteusai.)”

Our faith in every part of the Bible does not rest on the illumination of the writers, but on the inspiration of the written word. It rests on God, not on man.

History proves that the failure to make a distinction between illumination and inspiration leads to one of two evils; either the Bible is lowered to the level of the writings of the religious leaders of the Church, or else their writings are raised to the level of the Scriptures.

Individuals and religious organizations have lowered the Scriptures to the level of the sayings of the saints. Many Protestant theologians have been lost in the timber of theological confusion because they failed to follow the hand of the compass of the Lord that tells us that the sacred writers “speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth.”

The Jews have even gone so far as to make “the words of the scribes * * * more agreeable than those of the prophets.” But it is not only the Jews who “transgress the commandment of

God" because of old tradition and new teachings. Christ still has occasion to say: "Ye have made void the Word of God because of your tradition."

It has been said about the Latins that "They have considered the fathers, the popes, and the councils of the successive ages of the Roman Church, as endowed with an infallibility which puts them on a level with Jesus, the Prophets and the Apostles, if not above them." It is this that has made possible the promotion of doctrines that are contrary to the Word of God.

What about the controversy between the Liberals and the Fundamentalists in the Reformed Churches of the present day? How can anyone hold any of the liberal views of the Liberals if he believes what the Bible teaches in regard to inspiration? How can anyone be Liberal and believe that "no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit?" We find no difficulty with the Scriptural teachings concerning miracles, the Virgin birth, the atonement, the second coming of the Lord, etc., if we believe that the Bible is the Word of God.

This present controversy is only a natural consequence of the theory of Degrees of Inspiration.

THEORIES OF INSPIRATION

First the "non-essential" things in the Bible are questioned, then one thing after another, until the "fundamental" things are rejected.

Mechanical Inspiration.

The Mechanical theory of Inspiration has also been known as the Mystical theory, also called the Dictation theory. According to this theory, the writer becomes "a mere soulless machine, mechanically answering the force which moves it, the pen and not the penman of the Holy Spirit. He ceases to be a man while he is affected by the frenzy (mania) of the heathen seers, and in a momentary influence gives up his whole spiritual growth."

Unless we keep this meaning of the Mechanical theory in mind we are liable to be led astray by the negative critics, who delight to use the words "plenary" and "dynamical" as if there were no difference between the Plenary and the Mechanical theories. The expression, "Verbal Theory," is also used in the same way, though occurring less frequently, in the sense of the Plenary theory.

While in olden days there were even a few Christian Church fathers who "regarded the sa-

cred writers as wholly possessed by the Spirit, and uttering its dicta in a species of frenzy," yet it is a question if they held the view that some of the enemies of Divine Inspiration claim that they did. That they went too far in holding that "every part of Scripture was * * * not only pregnant with instruction, but with instruction of the same kind, and in the same sense," is evident. Their difficulty was that they "considered the Divine agency of Inspiration as acting externally, and not internally, as acting on man, and not through man." From the Bible we learn that "the Spirit of Christ which was in them" did "testify." Hence it is that the Lord speaks by the mouths of the inspired men.

Since this Mechanical theory, in the sense we have defined it, does not have the support of history, and above all, since it does not rest on Scriptural authority, we will not seek to support it.

Undeveloped Theories.

Before we turn to the only tenable theory of Inspiration, we wish to observe that there are undeveloped ideas regarding the Inspiration of the Scriptures that will undoubtedly develop into new theories of Inspiration. In the historical

background given at the beginning of this thesis we find the beginnings of all the theories of Inspiration of today, and more than this, there are ideas of Inspiration that are not yet developed. Some recently published theological works assume the attitude of promulgating new theories. Close observation reveals that these are hundreds of years old. They have been given new names and are clothed in new words, but the ideas are the same as of old. True, there has been progress in our theological thinking, and some new thoughts have been added to the old. We see some things more clearly today than the Church fathers did in their day. If our children prove true to their trust, they will comprehend things that we scarcely apprehend. We do not doubt that there will be new theories of Inspiration, based on ideas not yet expressed.

PART III
FACTS OF INSPIRATION

PART III

FACTS OF INSPIRATION

Whatever theories the past has produced and whatever the future may find, one fact remains—The Bible is the Word of God. Men may sway from one extreme to the other in their theories concerning this, but the theory that holds this as a fact is the only one that holds good; it is the only one that stands the test of time; it is the only Biblical theory. In our estimation it is more than a mere theory, it is a fact, based on the eternal truth of God. We are tempted to use the common name for this fact, namely, Plenary. But that word is vague. It has been misused and abused until its meaning is not what it used to be. The word Plenary does not express what we want to say. We feel obliged to use another word. The word Dynamical has been used. But it too has its limitations and fails to tell the whole truth. Pope in his "Higher Catechism of Theology," says: "Both words are

vague, having more of the semblance than of the reality of definition. If 'plenary' signifies that the power of the Spirit is in every part of the Bible, adapting itself to the subject and securing that the doctrine shall be sound and the history true, it may be accepted as a tribute to the Divine element. If 'dynamical' signifies that the human writers are always actuated by the Spirit as thinking, examining, collating, witnessing and reasoning men, it may be accepted as a tribute to the human element. The combination of plenary and dynamical is hard; but it is not impossible."

Can we not combine all true meanings of Divine Inspiration in the Biblical word "Theopneustos?" Yes. And our authority is the Word of God. What name shall we give to this theory? Because of the confusion that exists in the theological terminology of today it seems best to use the Greek word rather than a translation of it. Hence we shall call this fact the Theopneustos Theory.

The often quoted and fundamental Bible passage, II Tim. 3:16, does not say that the Bible is inspired. It says more than that. It does not say that the Bible is breathed into by God, nor that it is "the product of the Divine 'inbreathing'

into its human authors." It does tell us that it is "breathed out by God, 'God-breathed,' the product of the creative breath of God." It does tell us that the Scriptures are a Divine product of the creative breath of God. It does tell us that the Scriptures are a Divine product. While this particular passage refers in the first place to the Old Testament, elsewhere the Word speaks of the entire Scriptures as Divinely inspired.

Before we take up the historical and Biblical proofs of this theory, it might be well to consider how the Sacred Canon was established. This is to a great extent a purely historical question. True it produces in men's hearts "an inward testimony and conviction of the Holy Ghost," which attest its inimitable divinity, independent of any testimony of men. Then there is the touchstone: "Do they preach Christ, or do they not preach Him?" But more sure than these is "the common accord and agreement of the Church." The Old Testament has the testimony of the Jewish Church. "Unto them was committed the oracles of God." As a warranty for the New Testament we have the extraordinary respect of the ancient Christians for the sacred texts, the pains taken by learned men in different ages to preserve the purity of the sacred text, quotations by the fathers of the Church,

mutual jealousy of the sects, the early versions in ancient tongues, the number and abundant dissemination of manuscripts of the New Testament.

The causes for the knowledge we have of the authority of the New Testament are, first, the objective cause, the Bible itself, which proves its divinity by its own beauty, and by its own doings; in the second place, the subjective or efficient cause, the Holy Ghost, who confirms and seals to our souls the testimony of God; and in the third place, the instrumental cause, the Church Universal, who is a depository and not a judge. (See Gaussen.)

Theopneustos.

Facts Stated and Established.

Testimony of the Ancient Church. A careful consideration of the teachings of the ancient Church regarding the Inspiration of the Scriptures led Rudelbach to say that there is hardly "a single point with regard to which there reigned, in the first eight ages of the Church, a greater and more cordial unanimity." He draws the following conclusions, well supported by quotations from the Greek and Latin fathers:

1. The ancient Church, with one unanimous voice, teaches that all the canonical writings of the Old and New Testaments are given by the Holy Spirit of God.

2. She maintains the infallibility of the Scriptures together with their sufficiency and their plenitude.

3. The ancient Church, viewing the whole Scriptures as an utterance, on the part of God, addressed to man, and dictated by the Holy Ghost, has ever maintained that there is nothing erroneous, nothing useless, nothing superfluous; and that in this Divine work, as in that of creation, one may always recognize, amid the richest plenty, the greatest and wisest economy. Every word there will be found to have its object, its point of view, its sphere of efficacy.

4. The ancient Church has always maintained that the doctrine of Holy Scripture is the same throughout, and that the Spirit of the Lord gives utterance in every part of it to one and the same testimony. She vigorously opposed that science, falsely so called (I Tim. 6:20), which even in the first ages of her history, had taken a regular shape in the doctrines of the Gnostics, and which, daring to impute imperfections to the Old Testament, made it appear that

there were contradictions between one apostle and another apostle, when there were really none.

5. The ancient Church thought that inspiration ought chiefly to be viewed, it is true, as a passive state, but as a state in which the human faculties, far from being extinguished or set aside by the action of the Holy Ghost, were exalted by His virtue, and filled with His light.

6. She strenuously opposed the false notion that the prophet ceased to have mastery of his senses and was in a state which the Pagans attributed to their sibyls (mania or *ekstasei*). She taught that the prophet does not speak in a state of ecstasy and that one may distinguish by this trait false prophets from the true.

7. By means of various definitions she sought to give greater clearness to the idea of Divine inspiration, and to disentangle it from the difficulties with which it was sometimes obscured. In these efforts she showed how much she cherished this doctrine.

8. She extended inspiration to words as well as to things.

9. The ancient Church, by her constant mode of quoting the Scriptures, in order to es-

tablish and defend her doctrines; by her manner of expounding and commenting on them; and by the use which she recommends all Christians, without exception, to make of them as a privilege and a duty, shows still more strongly, if it be possible, than she could have done by direct declarations, how attached she was to the doctrine of a verbal inspiration. In recognizing apparent contradictions sometimes presented by the Gospel narrative she taught that the difficulty lies in our ignorance, and not in the Scriptures. Whether we can explain the alleged discrepancies or not, the Gospel remains entirely true.

10. The ancient Church was so strongly attached to the doctrine of the personality of the Holy Spirit, and of His sovereign action in the composition of the whole Scriptures, that she made no difficulty in admitting at one and the same time the greatest variety and the greatest liberty in the phenomena, in the occasion, in the person, in the characters, and in the external circumstances, under the concurrence of which the work of God was accomplished. At the same time that she owned with St. Paul, that in all the operations of this Spirit it is one and the self-same Spirit that divideth to every man severally as He will (I Cor. 12: 11), she equally

admitted that in the work of divine inspiration, the divine causation was exercised amidst a large amount of liberty, as respects human manifestations.

11. The ancient Church shows us more completely still, by two other traits, the ideas she had formed of divine inspiration, by the care she took, on the one hand to fix the relations which the doctrine of divine inspiration bore to the doctrine of the gifts of grace; and on the other to exhibit the proofs of inspiration.

Although the ancient Church presents this spontaneous and universal agreement in the doctrine of inspiration, we must not imagine that this great phenomenon is attached to some particular system of theology, or may be explained by that system. No more must we regard this wonderful agreement as the germ of a theory that was to establish it at a later period in the Church. No. The very assertions of an opposite opinion which, from time to time, made themselves heard on the part of heretics of the first centuries, and the nature of the replies that were put forth by the ancient Church, clearly demonstrate, on the contrary, that this doctrine was deeply rooted in the Church's conscience. Every time that the Fathers, in defending any

truth by passages from the Scripture, succeeded so far as to drive their adversaries into the impossibility of defending themselves, otherwise than by denying the full inspiration of the the divine testimonies, the Church thought the question was decided. The adversary was tried; he had no more to say for himself; he denied the Scripture to be the Word of God! What more remained to be done, but to compel him to look his own ill-favored argument in the face, and to say to him, "See what you have come to!" as one would bid a man who has disfigured himself, look at himself in a glass? And this the Fathers did.

Thus spoke the Church. To the early Church the Bible is the Word of God. When the Church, as well as the individual, could point to the Scripture and say: "Thus saith the Lord!" it was sufficient to satisfy the doubting individual and to overcome the arguments of philosophical skepticism.

We have reached a period in the history of the human race when we question the authority of both God and man. Individuals and organizations of today again ask the questions that were asked long ago, "What is truth?" and "Who is the Lord, that I should hearken to His

voice?" Religious liberty has run into riotous license. The Church is challenging Christ's commission to the Christians, to teach all nations "to observe all things whatsoever He commanded them."

But there is still a remnant that shall be saved. There are still many thousands that have not bowed their knees and worshipped at the materialistic altar of the modern goddess of rationalism. With these we turn to the Word of God with the question, "What do the Scriptures teach concerning Inspiration?" We invite all who will honestly search the Scriptures to listen to the Lord as He speaks to man in His Holy Word about this fact.

Testimony of the Scriptures. Let the Old Testament speak. We learn that the Lord speaks by the mouth of men and thus makes His will known to men. Jehovah said unto Moses: "Now therefore go, I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt speak." A common expression is, "The mouth of Jehovah hath spoken." David says: "The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, and His word was upon my tongue." (II Sam. 23:2) "Hear the Word of Jehovah!" Thus the Prophets introduce what they have to say. The word of Jehovah came

to and by the various prophets. The phrase "Thus saith the Lord," or its equivalent, occurs about two thousand times in the Old Testament.

Sometimes men spoke contrary to their wishes because Jehovah put the words in their mouths. Witness Balaam attempting three times to curse Israel, but failing to utter words but those of benediction placed in his mouth by the Lord! The Spirit of the Lord came upon Saul and he prophesied. The Spirit rested upon the seventy elders, and they prophesied. When the Spirit departed they no longer possessed this Divine gift.

That the Prophets did not understand all that was spoken by them is evident in the Old Testament writings and specifically stated in I Peter 1: 10-12, where we read: "The Prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them. To whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto you, did they minister these things, which now have been announced unto you through them that preached the gospel unto

you by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven; which things angels desire to look into."

Isaiah introduces his "vision" with the words: "Hear O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for Jehovah hath spoken." Jeremiah says: "Then Jehovah put forth his hand, and touched my mouth; and Jehovah said unto me, Behold I have put my words in thy mouth" * * * and again, "Thus speaketh Jehovah, the God of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book." (1:9 and 30:2)

In the Psalms we read: "The law of Jehovah is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of Jehovah is sure, making wise the simple." (19:7) "The words of Jehovah are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace on the earth, purified seven times." (12:6)

Need we multiply quotations from the Old Testament that tell us that it is the very Word of God?

How does the New Testament speak of the inspiration of the Old? In a way that assumes that the Spirit "both speaks and writes in the ancient oracles." In Acts (1:16; 4:25) we read that the Holy Ghost spake by the mouth of

David. And in the third chapter, verses 18 to 21, we read: "The things which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled. Repent ye therefore * * * that he may send the Christ * * * even Jesus: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets that have been from of old."

In the book of Matthew, for example, we frequently find the expression: "Which was spoken by the Lord through the Prophet." (1:22; 2:5; 2:15; 2:23; 13:35; 21:4; 27:9; etc.) Stephen's defense is full of evidence that he believed in the inspiration of the Old Testament. References to and quotation from "the Law and the Prophets" are found throughout the New Testament.

The New Testament has much to say that testifies of its own inspiration, as well as of the inspiration of the whole Bible. The Apostles surely are worthy "witnesses." Let us have a few of their testimonies.

Call Peter. He is ready with a reply. He announces himself as "an Apostle of Jesus Christ." He testifies that "the Spirit of Christ" in the Prophets did point unto the sufferings

and glories of Christ, and the "things angels desire to look into."

The Bible cannot be a human product, for, "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower falleth; but the word of the Lord abideth forever. And this is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you."

How does Peter know this? "Because it is contained in the Scripture." And "no prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit."

"How do you compare the writings of Paul with the other Scriptures?"

Peter replies: "Our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things (the last days); wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unsteadfast wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction." (I 1:1, 12, 24, 25; 2:6; II 1: 19-21; 3:15, 16.)

Let James answer the question: "How can we do well?" His reply is: "If ye fulfill the

royal law, according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well."

John testifies that "It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth." He says: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet saying, What thou seest, write in a book and send it to the seven churches." Later he says: "And He that sitteth on the throne said, Behold I make all things new. And He saith, Write: for these words are faithful and true." And again: "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this Book." (I 5:7; Rev. 1:10, 11; 21:5; 22:18, 19.)

Summon Paul and let him testify:

"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an Apostle, (not from men, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father) separated unto the gospel of God, which He promised afore through his Prophets in the Holy Scriptures. God separated me, even from

my mother's womb, and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles. We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God." (Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:1, 15, 16; II Cor. 5:20.)

"How did you obtain your Gospel?"

"I make known unto you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ. Unto us God revealed it through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the things of God none knoweth save the Spirit of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words. By revelation was made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote before in few words, whereby when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ; which hath now been revealed unto His holy Apostles and Prophets

in the Spirit." (Gal. 1:11, 12; I Cor. 2:10, 11, 13; Eph. 3:3-5.)

"Why do men fail to realize this?"

"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged." (I Cor. 2:14)

"How can you, being a bondservant, speak of your Gospel?"

"God shall judge the secrets of men, according to my gospel, by Jesus Christ. We beseech and exhort you in the Lord Jesus. Christ speaketh in me. Therefore he that rejecteth, rejecteth not man, but God. So then, brethren, stand fast, and hold the tradition which ye were taught, whether by word, or by epistle of ours." (Rom. 2:16; I Thes. 4:1; II Cor. 13:3; I Thes. 4:8; II Thes. 2:15.)

"Do you, a man of much learning, believe all things that are written in the Scriptures?"

"I confess unto thee, that after the Way which they call a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers, believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written in the Prophets." (Acts 24:14) "It is in truth the Word of God." (I Thes. 2:13)

“Is the whole Bible inspired?”

“Every Scripture is inspired of God, and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.” (II Tim. 3:16, 17)

We do not desire to play the part of Pilate and call Christ to the witness stand, but we want to sit down at the feet of our Saviour and say with Samuel: “Speak, Jehovah, for thy servant heareth.”

We hear Him say: “It is written, It is written. It is written.” (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10) He tells us what “David himself said in the Spirit.” (Mark 12:36) He asks: “Have ye not read?” (Matt. 19:4; 22:31) He says: “Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.” (Matt. 22:29) In the description of the interview on the way to Emmaus we read: “And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.”

Speaking about the Scriptures, Christ says: “These are they which bear witness of me.” (John 5:39) He taught that “the Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35), and lived accordingly. He pointed out how things concerning

Him were being fulfilled. (Luke 4:21) His birth, His life, His death were according to the Scriptures. He expressed His agony on the cross in words of the Scriptures, and in the hour of death "Jesus, knowing that all things are now finished, that the Scripture might be accomplished, saith, I thirst."

His Great Commission includes instruction to teach all nations "to observe all things" according to His command. His word is the law according to which men will be judged. He says: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I spake not from myself; but the Father that sent me, He hath given me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak." (John 12:48, 49)

Christ tells His disciples: "Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

After His resurrection He came to them and said: "Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." He breathed on them and said: "Receive ye the Holy Spirit:

whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." (John 20:21-23)

To His disciples first of all He promised the special guidance of the Holy Spirit in the hour of trial. He says: "The Holy Spirit shall teach you in that very hour what ye ought to say." (Luke 12:12; Matt. 10:19, 20; Mark 13:11)

The authority with which He vested those whom He appointed for special service is further indicated by the following: "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth Him that sent me;" and, "he that heareth you heareth me; and he that rejecteth you rejecteth me; and he that rejecteth me rejecteth Him that sent me." (Matt. 10:40; Luke 10:16) For the Son of Man, "the Father, even God, hath sealed." (John 6:27)

One absolute evidence for the Divine origin and authority of the Bible is the undeniable fact that "God" and "Scripture" are identified. Dr. B. B. Warfield has well pointed out this fact in the following words: "What Scripture says, God says; and accordingly we read such remarkable declarations as these: 'For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, For this very purpose did I raise thee up' (Rom. 9:17); 'And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by

faith, preached the gospel beforehand unto Abraham * * * In thee shall all the nations be blessed.' (Gal. 3:8) These are not instances of simple personification of Scripture, which is itself a sufficiently remarkable usage (Mark 15:28; John 7:38, 42; Rom. 4:3; 10:11; 11:2; Gal. 4:30; I Tim. 5:18; James 2:23; 4:5 f.) vocal with conviction expressed by James (4:5) that Scripture is the Word of God. It was not 'Scripture' that spoke to Pharaoh, or gave his great promise to Abraham, but God. But 'Scripture' and 'God' lay so close together in the minds of the writers of the New Testament that they could naturally speak of 'Scripture' as what Scripture records God as doing. It was, however, even more natural to them to speak casually of God, saying what the Scriptures say; and accordingly to meet with forms of speech such as these: 'Wherefore, even as the Holy Spirit saith, Today if ye shall hear His voice,' etc. (Heb. 3:7, quoting Ps. 95:7) 'Thou art God * * * who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why do the heathen rage?' etc. (Acts 4:25 A.V., quoting Ps. 2:1); 'He that raised him from the dead * * * hath spoken on this wise, I will give you * * * because he saith also in another (place)' * * * (Acts 13:34, quoting Isa. 55:3 and Ps. 16:10), and the like. The words put into God's

mouth in each case are not words of God recorded in the Scriptures, but just Scripture words in themselves. When we take the two classes of passages together, in the one of which the Scriptures are spoken of as God, while in the other God is spoken of as if He were the Scriptures, we may perceive how close the identification of the two was in the minds of the writers of the New Testament. * * * "

In the first chapter of Hebrews we have passages in which God is the speaker and passages in which God is not the speaker, but is addressed or spoken of, indiscriminately assigned to God, because they all have it in common that they are words of Scripture, and as a compact mass of words of God occasioned the formation of a designation for them by which their character was explicitly expressed. This designation is "the sacred oracles," "the oracles of God." * * * Scripture is thought of as the living voice of God speaking in all parts directly to the reader * * * Its authority rests on its divinity and its divinity expresses itself in its trustworthiness; and the New Testament writers in all their use of it treat it as what they declare it to be—a God-breathed document, which, because God-breathed, is through and through trustworthy in all its assertions, authoritative in all its declarations, and

down to its last particular the very word of God, His Oracles."

Theopneustos is a fact, established by the authority of God.

Nature Examined.

The fact established, we inquire into the nature of Inspiration. We must bear in mind that truth is immutable. Revelation is progressive. The Lord presented the truth in the form that men were able to bear it. The Apostles had been with Christ a long time when He said: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth."

Herder says: "The faults of the Old Testament are the faults of the pupil, not of the teacher. They are the necessary incidents of a course of moral education, they are the unavoidable limitations of a partial and progressive Revelation. If God chooses to enter on a historic course of Revelation, then that Revelation must be accommodated to the necessities and limited by the capacities, mental and moral, of each successive age."

Even after Pentecost, some truths were gradually revealed to the Apostles. Witness what a time Peter had to comprehend that salvation was for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews!

“Truth must be examined,” says Westcott, “in relation to the age in which the revelation was made. At one time it is to be sought in the simple relations of the patriarchal household; at another, in the more complicated interest of national existence; at another, in the still deeper mysteries of individual life; at another, in the infinite fulness of the Saviour’s work, or in the perplexing difficulties which beset the infant Churches. But each form has its proper and enduring lesson: each record constitutes a link in the golden chain which, to use Homeric allegory, has again bound the earth with all its varied interest to the throne of God.”

That the sacred historians obtained some knowledge by human means is evident. St. Luke says: “It seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee in order.” God made known to the sacred amanuenses whether they should make use of the things that they knew, or “under what circumstances, in what order, and with what words they should be com-

mitted to writing." Our faith rests not on the illumination of the writers. It rests on the Divine Inspiration of their writings.

Inspiration did not make the sacred writers mere machines. It did not destroy their conscious self-control. Retaining their mental activity, the inspired men spoke and wrote like men in full possession of their faculties. True, they were under Divine guidance and influence. Under the influence and guidance of the Holy Spirit, they examined, compared, discussed and decided like ordinary men. But they were conscious of the fact that they were co-operating with the Holy Spirit. The Council of Jerusalem gives evidence of this fact. After due deliberation, the Council issued a decree prefaced with these words: "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us."

The sacred writers were not sinless. David passed a long year in adultery. Solomon fell into idolatry. Paul spoke evil of the ruler of his people. Peter stood condemned. "We are to distinguish," says Quenstedt, "between the conversation of the Apostles and their preaching and writing; or between infirmities in conduct and errors in doctrine. In doctrine the Apostles never could err, after receiving the gift of the

Holy Spirit * * * but in their conduct and outward conversation they were not sinless, but in consequence of innate original corruption, were still subject to infirmities and failings." These sinful men, when inspired by the Holy Spirit, became the "holy men" who "spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." (II Peter 1:21)

We do not deny that the individuality of the Sacred writers is in evidence. We admire it. Some one has said: "The cultured scholars wrote and spoke as such; the herdsman or the fisherman showed his provincial training. The poet remained a poet, the philosopher a philosopher, the historian an historian, each with his own idiosyncrasies, ways and methods." But we do not forget that each individual character had been "prepared and sanctified by God for the work to which it had been destined by God."

The Bible then is the product of the inexplicable, mysterious union of the Holy Spirit and the minds of the sacred writers. It is one and indivisible. The Bible is all alike divine, all alike human; it is theanthropic. Concerning the mingling of the divine and the human, Paterson Smyth says: "We cannot draw a line between the divine and the human. We cannot say of any part, 'This is divine,' or 'This is human.'"

FACTS OF INSPIRATION

In some parts, as the Gospels, there seems to be more of the divine; in others, as the Chronicles, more of the human. * * * It is as sunlight through a painted window. The light must come to us colored by the medium. We cannot get it in any other way. In some parts the medium is denser and more imperfect; in others the golden glory comes dazzling through. The light cannot be separated from the tint given by the medium. Every ray is mingled light and color. It is foolish to ignore the existence of this medium * * * But how much more foolish to ignore the light and deem that the tinted dome is luminous itself, that the light of heaven has only come from earth! There is no noble teaching without the Spirit of God; there is no true light for the soul of man but through 'the light that lighteth every man coming into the world!'"

As Christ, the Son of God, appeared in human flesh, so the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, appears in human words. As the incarnate Word was pure and perfect in every respect, so the Written Word is perfect, sure, right, pure and true. (Ps. 19: 7-9) "The Holy Ghost," says Claude, "employed the pen of the evangelists * * * and of the Prophets. He supplied them with the occasions on which they wrote; He gave them the wish and the

strength to do so; the matter, form, order, economy, expressions, are from His immediate inspiration and direction."

The Christian accepts the Bible as the mind and word of God, given by His Holy Spirit, through the instrumentality of holy men, for it IS the Word of God.

PART IV

ALLEGED DISCREPANCIES EXAMINED

PART IV

ALLEGED DISCREPANCIES EXAMINED

I. *The Case Stated.*

He who wants not to believe will find an excuse, more or less satisfactory to himself, for his unbelief. He who wants to believe will often find difficulties and obstacles that seem, at least for the time being, to block the way of faith. There are difficulties, discrepancies, and contradictions in his own life. There are bottomless canons and topless mountains. Looking about himself he sees the raging sea. His faltering faith fails. He is sinking in the sea of despair. But with his eyes still on the Saviour he cries out: "Lord save, I perish!"

Saved by his Saviour, and surrendered to Him, he yet meets with difficulties. He turns to his Bible, the Holy Book, the inspired Word, the Word of God. Even there he meets serious difficulties. And unless his heart is stronger than

his mind, his trust stronger than his knowledge, he goes astray, gets lost, often for time and eternity. Even he who long has held his Saviour's hand, and whose mind has been enlightened by the Light of the World, and whose heart has been kindled by Divine Love, finds it impossible to measure the length and the breadth, the height and the depth of the Word of God.

There are things in the Bible that are referred to as "alleged discrepancies." What does this mean? An allegation is an assertion "without proof, but with the implication of readiness or ability to prove." A discrepancy is a disagreement, a variance, a discordance, or a contrariety. An alleged discrepancy would then be an unproved statement of a shortcoming of the Bible.

The sources of these assertions and of the wrong conceptions of the Bible are many and varied. The enemies of Christ will misinterpret, and misconstrue, pervert and profane in their attempt to discredit Christianity and to exalt their selfish purposes. To the superficial reader there appears to be discrepancies in the Bible. To the honest reader also there are difficulties. Even the true Christian finds mysteries that he cannot comprehend. He finds things that are too

good, too beautiful, too true for him to understand. But he who seeks shall find, if he seeks in spirit and in truth.

Difficulties Admitted.

Such seeking indicates how we should deal with the apparent shortcomings of the Bible. To surmount the obstacles, to find the truth, we must be honest with ourselves, with others, and with the holy thing that we handle. If we are honest with ourselves, with others, and with these things we must expect to find "difficulties." We are finite. How can we hope to understand every thing that concerns the Infinite? True, God has condescended to speak to us in human terms. But these instruments are poor means for expressing divine truths. Only in the measure that we see the life in these forms, the Spirit in these words, can we understand the language of our God and Saviour. We cannot see this life and this Spirit unless we are led by the Spirit of God, for they must be spiritually discerned. We must admit, if we are not too selfish to do so, that there are things in the Bible that we cannot fully understand. It is better to admit this than to offer explanations that do not explain. Such attempts will do more harm than good.

How to Deal With These Difficulties.

Not only honesty, but humility is required of the true seeker after truth. The showers of truth glance off the hard rocks of pride and fall into the good soil of humility and there bring forth fruit, some thirty, some sixty, some an hundredfold. That you or I cannot solve a problem today does not say that there is no solution. Walking humbly through the streets to the heights beyond we shall soon see the city that at first we could not see because of the houses.

It requires persistency and determination to learn to read the Bible well. Often it takes a lifetime to become proficient in one branch of art, or in one profession, or in one trade. Yet some seem to think that they should be able to master theology in a day. He who would obtain this pearl without price must seek with his whole soul and, having found it, he must sell all that he has in order to buy it. But it is well worth while, for this jewel is profitable for time and eternity. This pertains especially to the great truth that we have salvation through faith in Jesus Christ; a truth that any honest seeker can find and understand.

No one need fear that the Word of God is in

danger when a difficulty is found, no matter how unanswerable or how insurmountable it may appear at first. The Bible has stood the test of time. Truth may be covered by the ashes of falsehood for a time, but ere long this is blown and washed away and the truth sparkles brighter than ever before. Critics, high and low, may attack the Word, Satan with all his power may seek to destroy it, still it is firm for it is the foundation of the rock against which the gates of Hades shall not prevail.

Fight fire with fire, says an old adage. Be there much or little truth in this, one thing sure is that we must interpret Scripture by Scripture. The Bible is its own best commentary.

The last and possibly the greatest requisite for the one who will understand his Bible is prayer. Prayer shatters the clouds that obscure the shining light. Prayer removes the veil and lets the petitioner enter into the holy of holies where God reveals His will from the Mercy Seat.

Such are the requirements for solving Biblical difficulties.

A General Statement of the Sources.

A general statement of the sources of these

difficulties will help to clear away many things. Ignorance may be bliss in a few—very few—instances. But ignorance in Biblical truths is the curse of the age.

Misunderstanding of the vernacular causes much trouble for many. Words often have a particular meaning in the Bible. Here and there the translation is faulty in that it does not express the same idea as the original text. The many and varied manuscripts cause some confusion in minor points. But the consoling fact about this difficulty is that these variances do not effect any fundamental doctrine of the Bible. There are undoubtedly truths hidden in the original that have not yet been expressed by any translator.

So-called "science" with all that it implies, has caused many to stumble—not because they have known too much science, but because they have not known enough of true science. For when science, the knowledge of truth, has comprehended truth, she will agree with the teaching of the Bible; not necessarily with our present interpretation of the Bible in every respect, but with the true teaching of the Word of God. Not only faulty knowledge but also the lack of knowledge is the cause of many difficulties. The

more we know of the geography of the Bible lands the clearer we see how true the incidental references to nature are. The true history of the Jews and of the Gentiles corroborates the Bible record.

Another fruitful source of "discrepancies" is the lack of sympathy on the part of the critic. Sometimes he is color blind, often he wears colored glasses. Sometimes he is far-sighted, often near-sighted. His point of view is wrong. He demands that the child of human development should know as much as the race that has been taught for thousands of years. He judges the past in the present "light." Further he demands that the Bible should be a modern textbook of science. Thanks to Divine Providence that this is not so, for then our dear old Book would be out of date in a year or two. The Bible is the Book of Divine Truth for all men of all ages.

Closely allied to this are the so-called moral questions of the Bible. But even these when they are not torn from the context need not, and should not, cause serious difficulties. It is essential to remember that the Bible does not approve of the wicked deeds that it records. One should also remember that the Holy Record presents a "progressive revelation."

Too much mind and not enough heart, is generally the cause of a man's difficulties when he tries to interpret the supernatural by the natural, when he seeks to explain the infinite by the finite.

All this, however, does not say that we should not exercise our God-given power of reason, and such other powers as our Creator has given and gives us, to solve the problems and remove the difficulties that come in our way when we study the Sacred Word.

II. *Difficulties Examined.*

Ignorance. One of the most popular objections against the Bible is the question: "Where did Cain get his wife?" This question and the spirit in which it is generally asked shows more foolish ignorance than any man with common sense should be willing to manifest. Such a man deserves to be answered according to his folly. He likes to pose as a scientist. But it is such men that have brought science into disrepute. The chances are that this man claims to be an evolutionist. Suppose that he is, and that he "believes" man descended from a common ancestor, will he please explain where the second generation got their partners. Were they

not "sisters" and "brothers"? Of necessity it must have been so at the beginning of the human race, although the marrying of sisters and brothers was later forbidden by Divine command, and today is a crime. But does not the Bible say that, "Cain went into the land of Nod and took to himself a wife?" No. Such are the words of the scoffer. The Bible says: "And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch." The word "knew" in this connection does not mean to get acquainted with. We find this word in many places in the Bible where it is an euphemistic expression for the act of sexual commerce. Undoubtedly Cain had his wife before he went to Nod and took her there with him. Thus this "discrepancy" disappears without any difficulty whatever; and so do many others if we only read what the Bible says and not what men say that the Bible says.

Misunderstanding the words, often causes anxiety. In Gen. 22:2 we are told that God commanded Abraham to offer Isaac "for a burnt-offering." Some would see in this a command to slay, and conclude from this that God justifies human sacrifices. Abraham understood it that way. And had not God taught him what a true sacrifice is, his descendants would also have understood it the same way. For it was

hard for Israel, influenced as they were by the surrounding heathen customs, to distinguish between "offer" and "kill." To them the two were synonymous. So far as the expression, "For a burnt-offering," is concerned, it may mean as (or towards) a burnt-offering, or also, "with a burnt-offering, in and under the symbolical presentation of it." But Abraham apparently understood it to mean that he should sacrifice Isaac in the same manner that he would sacrifice an animal from his flock. God, the giver of life, has the right to require it. He did not exercise this right here. But in His providence He used this misunderstanding of Abraham as a means for trying his faith, and at the same time He taught Abraham, Israel, yea, He taught mankind what true sacrifice is. The old patriarch learned that he should sacrifice his son to God in his heart. This he did and actually performed the sacrifice that God required, for we read in Heb. 11:17 and Jas. 2:21 that "he offered up Isaac."

Inaccurate translations. It is hard to give the exact meaning of one language in the words of another. Bible translations offer no exception to this rule. Sometimes it is virtually impossible to give the exact meaning. This causes difficulties,

especially to those who do not have the marginal reading also.

According to the English text, there seems to be a direct contradiction in the Acts of the Apostles. In Chapter 9:7 we read: "And the men that journeyed with Him stood speechless, **hearing the voice**, but beholding no man." In Chapter 22:9 we find the following: "And they that were with me beheld indeed the light, but they **heard not the voice** of Him that spake to me." In the first passage, the word translated as "voice," is used in the genitive in the Greek text and means "sound," rather than "voice," as it is correctly given in the margin of the American Standard Version. In the second case the word translated "voice" is in the accusative and means "voice." Hence one passage says that they heard the sound and the other denies that they heard the words. This is corroborated by a third account in Acts 26:14 where Paul says: "And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice." Notice, "we * * * fallen," "I heard." Here the word for "voice" is in the accusative. In John 12 some of the Greeks evidently heard the sound but not the words of the voice from heaven. Other little difficulties will vanish likewise when we know the exact meaning of the Bible.

One fruitful cause of "discrepancies" is the many and varied manuscripts, particularly of the New Testament. Of these there are over 3,000, with 150,000 variations. At first this seems alarming to the one who has held every jot and tittle of his dear old "Textus Receptus" to be inspired Word of God. But there is not the faintest shadow of well-founded suspicion that any one of these registered variations touches a single point that will endanger the Deposit of Faith, which God in His providence has given to us in the present form. God certainly "has been wonderfully careful of the Deposit—the Sacred Truth—the substance of His revelation, which is not impaired, amid the manifold variety of readings; while at the same time He has not been so careful of the casket, the bare letter, in which the jewel has been enshrined, perhaps for the very purpose of teaching us that the one is not of the same eternal consequence as the other." These variations are due to the mistakes of the copyists. Hammond classifies the possible sources of possible readings as follows: Unconscious or unintentional errors of sight, hearing, and memory; conscious or intentional incorporation of marginal glosses, etc.; corrections of harsh or unusual forms of words or expressions; alterations in the text to produce sup-

posed harmony with another passage, to complete a quotation, or to clear up a supposed difficulty; liturgical insertions, alterations for dogmatic reasons. When our Authorized Version was made a number of the best manuscripts were not in reach of the translators, nor was textual criticism so far advanced as it is today, hence this version was translated from an imperfect text. Not a few apparent difficulties arise from this source. Some of these mistakes have been corrected in later versions, either changed in the text or observed in the margin. A comparison of the version of 1611 with any of the later standard versions will show many of these variations. That does not, however, say that the latest versions are the most perfect in every respect. There are some who say that the expression, "son of Barachiah," in Matt. 23:35, is an interpolation. Many passages that today are obscure will, undoubtedly, from time to time open up their treasures and reveal their precious jewels.

The scope of this treatise does not allow detail in this sphere for it would lead into the intricate ramifications of Textual Criticism, and that in itself is a vast and complicated science. Suffice it to say that these variations with all their confusion concern only the covering for

the Deposit that God has revealed to mankind. A few small specks of dust on the background of the originally perfect picture that God gave to mankind, do not injure the Eternal Truth revealed in the Word of God. One by one these specks are removed and more grace is added to the glory of God.

Science is held by some to be in opposition to the teaching of the Bible. This claim comes chiefly from those who know little of either the Bible or of science. The real scientist and the true Bible scholar are twin brothers. The great theologians are very scientific in their methods. Some of the great scientists of our day find no difficulty in conciliating their ideas with the Bible record. Lord Kelvin says: "Physical science has nothing to say against the order of creation as given in Genesis." That the "days" in Genesis were periods of longer or shorter duration, is now so generally accepted that it does not require any special notice here. One of the greatest scientific thinkers of the nineteenth century, James D. Dana, said: "One reason why I believe the Bible to be the Word of God is because of the marvelous accord of the order of creation given in Genesis with that worked out by the best scientific investigation."

He who expects to find the Bible a textbook for the particular branch of science that he is interested in, shows his ignorance. Some one has well said: "That the Bible does not describe things or events in our scientific language, or in accordance with the pictures proposed by our scientific imagination. We agree. The Old Testament had to appeal to the ordinary man of ancient Israel as well as to succeeding generations; and just because it employs the common notions of common men, but these refined and moulded to a gradually unfolded purpose, its language remains ever fresh. And why should it adopt our phase of an ever-developing science?" From time to time the pictures of science have changed. Many textbooks are out of date two or three years after they leave the press. The Bible is more than a history of the Hebrew nation. It is rather a history of God's revelation to mankind. Faunce says: "The Bible should not be treated as if it were simply a record of man's moral development through the successive ages of human history. * * * The Bible purports to be God's history of God as He has manifested Himself, and as He has secured, through man, the record of those manifestations. Such a kind of Bible is the only Bible worth having."

Something might be said in this connection about the Macrobian, and the chronology of the Bible. Several explanations have been offered for the longevity of the Sethites, but the most satisfactory seems to be that death had, as yet, failed to make his full breach upon them, and, on the other hand, their inward intercourse with God increased their life power and lengthened their lives.

So far as the chronology is concerned, it is very helpful in many respects, but it must not be forgotten that the dates given in the margin are not a part of the Word of God. These, like the division of the Bible into chapters and verses, are human additions—not to say mutilations. In many instances they are helpful to us, sometimes they are rather a hindrance.

Lack of knowledge is a general heading under which many alleged discrepancies can be placed. Many of the “mistakes” in which the destructive critics have delighted have, to their shame, been vindicated by recent discoveries. Better knowledge of the flora and fauna of the sacred Record has cleared up many passages. More complete historical data has confirmed the Bible story. As an example of this Torrey gives the following: “In Acts 13:7 Luke speaks of ‘the

deputy' (or, more accurately, 'the proconsul,' see Revised Version) of Cyprus. Roman provinces were of two classes, imperial and senatorial. The ruler of an imperial province was called a 'propraetor'; of a senatorial province a 'proconsul.' Up to a comparatively recent date, according to the best information we had, Cyprus was an imperial province and therefore its ruler would be a 'propraetor'; but Luke calls him a 'proconsul.' This certainly seemed like a clear case of error on Luke's part, and even the conservative commentators felt forced to admit that Luke was in slight error, and the destructive critics were delighted to find this 'mistake.' But further and more thorough investigation has brought to light the fact that just at the time of which Luke wrote the senate had made an exchange with the emperor whereby Cyprus had become a senatorial province, and therefore its ruler a proconsul; and Luke was right after all, and the literary critics were themselves in error."

The division of the day into hours had caused some difficulty. Matthew, Mark, and Luke agree that Christ died on the cross at the ninth hour. They reckon from sunrise. John, on the other hand, uses the Roman method, and begins reckoning from midnight.

Forgetting the conditions under which certain portions of the Bible were written, causes misunderstanding. Passages from some of the Psalms are objected to, especially Psalm 137. In a book entitled, "Alleged Difficulties in Holy Scripture," published by the Catholic Truth Society, we find the following comment on the imprecatory part of this Psalm: "Terrible are these words; terrible the sufferings of those for whom the psalmist speaks; and terrible their cry for vengeance. Yet we have no difficulty in understanding how such feelings were entertained in those days and under those circumstances; and in the record of Jewish life and thought, the psalm is most valuable. The intensity of emotion, even though we allow for Oriental vehemence of expression, was natural to Jewish captives, caught in the merciless hand of Babylon. As they sat by the strange river, they remembered Jerusalem, and remembered too they were now among a people who would sometimes impale their prisoners, or flay them alive and hang their skins upon the city wall. All the human longings of the exiles went towards their little land on the high-road between the empire of the Euphrates and Tigris and that of the Nile, now a prey for the one or the other, and now a battlefield for both." It must also be remembered

that these imprecations were fulminated against the enemies of God. Do we not also see in these words a prophecy of the awful things that were to come, and did come, upon Babylon?

When we take into consideration the conditions under which the different portions of the Bible were written, we understand it much better than otherwise. The law and the gospel, the prophecies and the promises become infinitely more precious.

"Contradictions and mistakes," will also disappear when our knowledge increases. Yet, there are apparent such. John tells us (1:18) "No man hath seen God at any time." There are other similar passages. On the other hand, we read of people who have seen God; for example in Exodus 24:10 we find these words: "They saw the God of Israel." Such statements seem to contradict each other flatly. Yet they are absolutely true. John refers to God in His holy majesty, and not any particular manifestation of Him. God is a spirit, and cannot be perceived by our senses. We confess that God is omnipresent how then could we think it possible to see God? But God has manifested himself at various times and places and in various ways. That Moses, Aaron, Abihu, and the seventy

elders of Israel "saw no manner of form" is expressly intimated in Deuteronomy 4:15. Hence there was no visible form or representation of the Divine nature. "But a symbol or emblem of His glory was distinctly, and at a distance, displayed before those chosen witnesses." God has manifested Himself in other ways. His Great Manifestation was, of course, Jesus Christ. Christ was true man and true God. As man he was visible. God, the Father, was visible in Christ to the extent that Jesus could say: "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." How the Divine and the human were united in Jesus, surpasses human comprehension. But so far as seeing and not seeing God is concerned, we can see the manifestations of God, but we are too weak and sinful to see Him in His glory in our present state. In glory we shall see Him as He is.

Some see a "contradiction" in the records of the superscription on the cross. But reading closely and remembering that the substantial part of the charge against Christ was that He claimed to be "the King of the Jews" will help us here. These are the essential words, and they appear in all four Gospels. The other words are incidental and explanatory.

Another "contradiction" is found when we compare passages that tell us that God does not change, vary, or repent, with those that tell us that God repented. (Compare Malachi 3:6, James 1:17, and I Samuel 15:29 with Genesis 6:6 and Jonah 3:10) These passages at first glance seem to contradict each other. But when taken in their context and with the right conception of God's attitude toward good and evil, it is evident that they do not contradict each other, but much rather bring out the righteousness of a just and holy God. Speaking of the evil that God had meted out for the wicked Nineveh and that He "repented of the evil" when that city turned to Him in repentance, some one has well said: "When the message was sent to them, they were so ripe for judgment that a purpose of destruction to take effect in forty days was the only word God's righteous abhorrence of sin admitted of as to them. But when they repented, the position in which they stood towards God's righteousness was altered. So God's mode of dealing with them must alter accordingly, if God is not to be inconsistent with His own immutable character for dealing with men according to their works and state of heart, taking vengeance at last on the hardened impenitent, and delighting to show mercy to the

penitent. * * * What was really a change in them and in God's corresponding dealings is, in condescension to human conceptions, represented as a change in God (cf. Exodus 32:14) who, in His essential righteousness and mercy, changeth not." This applies to all such passages.

Comparing II Samuel 24:1 with I Chronicles 21:1 we find another apparent "contradiction." In the first it seems as if God moved David to number Israel, while in the second passage we read that Satan moved David to do this. As a matter of fact there is really no serious difficulty here, if we remember that God, though He cannot tempt any man (James 1:13) is often spoken of as doing what He only permits to be done. So it was in this case. He permitted Satan to tempt David. Satan was the actor, "while God only withdrew His supporting grace, and the great tempter prevailed against the king." Unless God would have allowed Satan to act he would not have had the power to move David to number the people. More than this God did here as He often does, namely direct the evil so that good results follow. David, for proud or selfish reasons, numbered the people. This was against the will of God and He used

Satan as an instrument whereby David was brought to the knowledge of his sin and humbled. Thus the wrath of man and the wrath of Satan led to the praise of the righteous God.

Some would see a mistake in that one author mentions only one of two or more who are connected with the same incident. (cf. Matt. 20:30 with Mark 10:46,47) But that only one is mentioned does not exclude the possibility of there being one, or many, more. We often use similar expressions. Coming home from Chicago we say that we met our friend John there, saying nothing about Peter and James, who were also with him.

The genealogies of Christ offer difficulties that have driven commentators of all ages to many and strange shifts. The following are among some of the solutions offered: (1) That the genealogies are imaginary lists designed only to set forth the union of royal and priestly descent in Christ. (2) That one genealogy is Joseph's and the other Mary's. (3) That Christ's ancestors from David downward had two names each. (4) Interpolations. (5) Lack of sufficient knowledge, etc. Lord Arthur Charles Hervey has given the following explanation, which in gen-

eral is quite satisfactory: They are both the genealogies of Joseph, i.e. of Jesus Christ, as the reputed and legal son of Joseph and Mary. The genealogy of Matthew is, as Grotius most truly and unhesitatingly asserted, Joseph's genealogy as legal successor to the throne of David, i.e. it exhibits the successive heirs of the kingdom ending with Christ as Joseph's reputed son. St. Luke's is Joseph's private genealogy, exhibiting his real birth, as David's son, and thus showing why he was heir to Solomon's crown. When, with this clew, we examine St. Matthew's list, to discover whether it contains in itself any evidence as to when the lineal descent was broken, we fix at once upon Jechonias, who could not, we know, be literally the father of Salathiel, because the word of God by the mouth of Jeremiah had pronounced him childless, and declared that none of his seed should sit upon the throne of David, or rule in Judah (Jer. 22:30). The same thing had been declared concerning his father Jehoikim, in Jer. 36:30. Jechonias, therefore, could not be the father of Salathiel, nor could Christ spring either from him or his father. Here then we have the most striking confirmation of the justice of the inference drawn from finding a second genealogy, namely, that St.

Matthew gives the succession, not the strict birth; and we conclude that the names after the childless Jechonias are those of his next heirs, as also in I Chr. 3:17. One more look at the two genealogies convinces us that this conclusion is just; for we find that the two next names following Jechonias, Salathiel and Zorobabel, are actually taken from the other genealogy, which teaches us that Salathiel's real father was Neri, of the house of Nathan. It becomes, therefore, perfectly certain that Salathiel of the house of Nathan became heir of David's throne on the failure of Solomon's line in Jechonias, and that as such he and his men were transferred as "sons of Jechoniah" to the royal genealogical table, according to the principle of the Jewish law laid down in Num. 27:8-11. The two genealogies coincide for two, or rather for four generations as will be shown below. There then occur six names in St. Matthew, which are not found in St. Luke; and then once more the two genealogies coincide in the name of Matthan or Matthat (Matt. 1:15; Luke 3:24) to whom two different sons, Jacob and Heli, are assigned, but one and the same grandson and heir, Joseph the husband of Mary, and the reputed father of Jesus, who is called Christ. The simple and obvious explanation of this is, on the same principle as before,

that Joseph was descended from Joseph, a younger son of Eliud (the Juda of Luke 3:26) but that on the failure of the line of Eliud's eldest son in Eleazar, Joseph's grandfather, Matthan, became the heir; that Matthan had two sons, Jacob and Heli; and that Jacob had no son, and consequently that Joseph, the son of the younger brother Heli, became heir to his uncle and to the throne of David. Thus the simple principle that one evangelist exhibits the genealogy which contained the successive heirs to David's and Solomon's throne, while the other exhibits the paternal stem of him who was the heir, explains all the anomalies of the two pedigrees, their agreement as well as their discrepancies, and the circumstance of there being two at all. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was in all probability the daughter of Jacob, and first cousin to Joseph her husband. So that in point of fact, though not of form, both the genealogies are as much hers as her husband's. The next difficulty is in the number of generations between the two genealogies. But the genealogy of St. Matthew itself supplies the explanation. It is obvious that the generations have been abridged so as to give three divisions of fourteen each. That there are only thirteen in the last group is undoubtedly due to the fact that two names, Jehoiakim and

Jehoiachin, have been confused and expressed by one name, Jechonias. The chronology seems to be out of harmony with the genealogy. But if the interval between the Exodus and David be shortened by about two hundred years, it brings it to the length indicated by the genealogies, and brings in a most remarkable manner the Israelitish history in harmony with the Egyptian, with the traditional Jewish date of Exodus, with the fragment of Edomitish history preserved in Genesis 36:31-39, and with internal evidence of Israelitish history itself.

Some would find a difficulty in understanding how Christ was "three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." One theory to overcome the "difficulty" is to place the time of Christ's death on Wednesday instead of on Friday, but this seems to offer more difficulty than to accept the meaning of the expression as used by the Jews, namely to count a portion of a day, however small, included within a period of days, as a full day. When we know that God condescended to reveal Himself to man in Christ, it is not hard to believe that Christ condescended to use the language of the people among whom He labored.

There is really no contradiction in the accounts

of the death of Judah, although at first glance there seems to be a variance when the first part of Matthew twenty-seven is compared with the words of Peter in Acts one. The latter is a supplement to the former. While we are not absolutely sure of how it happened, yet it is generally believed that when Judas hanged himself the rope broke, with the fearful consequence which Peter relates.

The following from the book referred to before, *Alleged Difficulties in Holy Scripture*, may serve to make clearer the incidents connected with the Resurrection of Christ: "The accounts of our Blessed Lord's Resurrection can be harmonized, when we allow time for the walk to the Holy Sepulchre, place the events in their due order, and distinguish the companies. Leaving home before daybreak, the women were going to the Holy Sepulchre. As they went, day dawned; and an angel descending into the garden to roll away the gravestone, the earth shook, and the guards became half-dead with terror. When the women drew near the tomb, the Magdalene saw it open, and hastened back to Jerusalem but the other women advanced, and saw two angels, who rose and stood before them. St. Matthew and St. Mark mention him only who spoke. Then the women hurried away, some

homeward and silent, others to tell the disciples. At the same time the guards went to tell the chief priests, the angels departed, and the garden was empty. But quickly, the Magdalene returned with St. Peter and St. John, whom she had told of the empty tomb. The apostles saw the grave-linen, but she our Lord Himself. Then she went back to Jerusalem, overtaking, it may be, the company of women, on their way to tell the disciples, and to whom our Lord appeared as they went. Then, when they reach Jerusalem and the Upper Room, they tell all to all the disciples, but no one and nothing is believed." This is not necessarily the correct arrangement of the incidents but it goes to show that when we let time for the events enter in, many difficulties, caused by our impatience, are removed. Compare the conversion and the following events in the life of St. Paul.

It is said that Scripture does not quote Scripture as if its very words were inspired. This in itself serves to confirm the true doctrine of inspiration. Undoubtedly the Lord and His Apostles sometimes quote the Septuagint as the authority to which we must bow without question. But there are quotations which show intentional changes that confirm the fact that the Scriptures are **theopneustos**. Could not the Divine Spirit

express the same truth in different words? Did He not through the different evangelists record the same events with different words?

Lack of sympathy and shortsightedness cause many misunderstandings. The Bible is the Word of God, but that does not say that God is the speaker of every utterance therein recorded. There are records of things spoken by God Himself, of things spoken by men, both good and evil, yea, of things spoken by Satan, who is the father of lies. Torrey says: "So in studying our Bible, if God is the speaker we must believe what He says. If an inspired man is the speaker, we must believe what he says. If an uninspired man is the speaker we must judge for ourselves—it is perhaps true, perhaps false. If it is the devil who is speaking, we do well to remember that he was a liar from the beginning, but even the devil may tell the truth sometimes." This is a thing we must not forget when we consider the deeds recorded in the Bible. With this in view there is really no difficulty in connection with the praise of Deborah and the acts of Jephthah. The Bible does not defend or approve of the wicked words and deeds therein recorded.

The so-called "moral questions" of the Holy Book have been criticised, especially by the enemies of the Bible. They object to the

detailed descriptions of evil and the "impure stories." But he who has learned to appreciate the wisdom and goodness of God and the ignorance and corruption of man, knows that without these very things the Bible would be no Bible at all. Well has Faunce said about the Bible and its morality; "A Bible with a historical department in it, that did 'not so much as mention' any sin or expose any evil might be a good enough Bible for some other kind of a world, but by that very omission it would be no Bible for such a world as this in which we live. The Bible must name evil, that it may denounce it. It must record certain events in order not only to exhibit their wrongfulness, but to show how God is constantly working and overruling all things for good in the end. And as to the objectionable words in Deuteronomy and Leviticus, it should be noted that they occur in what may be called the law books of the Bible. In such books vices and crimes must be defined, that they may be forbidden; they must be particularly described, and the very language has to be unmistakable. * * * Those laws should have a place in Biblical records, for they are, with new adaptations to modern conditions, the basis of the jurisprudence of the civilized world."

There are those who think that God showed Himself unmerciful when He hardened Pharaoh's heart. But if we study this case, as well as similar cases, we shall find that the mercy of God becomes prominent even in such instances. God speaks; His words soften the hearts of those who heed His commands, but they harden the hearts of those who do not hearken to them. Man, having the free will to choose between obedience and disobedience, is responsible for his acts if he does not obey God. The man that persists in defying God will become so hardened at last that God in His mercy must reject him and make it impossible for him to hinder His Holy purposes. It is when a man has gone that far that God hardens his heart. God certainly shows His mercy in so doing. So also with the coming of evil spirits. If man will not listen to the truth, God will permit evil and lying spirits to come and do their destructive work among men. The "new" religions of today are a good illustration of this. Even in this respect "as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting."

Some take exception to God's command to destroy the Canaanites. They say, how could God, who is love, command to destroy every

inhabitant of a city, regardless of age or sex? In the first place this command to destroy every one did not refer to all the Canaanites without any condition. In general the statement of Lange applies, namely, that two ways of escape were open to them: the way of flight from the land or the way of conversion to the Faith of Israel. The cunning of the Gibeonites found a third way. (Josh. 9) But the command to destroy every inhabitant of certain wicked cities, shows the love of God. These cities had become a moral cancer threatening the whole human race. When we think of how in some places in our larger cities men, women, and even little children have plunged into the depths of lust and sin, of vice and unmentionable villainess, one may well wonder that He does not blot them out as He commanded to be done with the Canaanites. "It was a command big with mercy and love. It was mercy and love, first of all, to the Israelites. Unless the Canaanites were exterminated, they would themselves be exterminated. In point of fact, they were contaminated for the very reason that they did not carry out God's stern decree to its fullest extent." God, who is all-wise, knew what was best even for the infants of the Canaanites. It is consciousness of sin and guilt in our own lives

that makes us rebel against God's way of dealing with sin and vice.

Other so-called moral questions could be cited, but suffice it to say that God has a purpose in placing in the Bible just what is there, and the better we understand His Word the more we thank Him for every passage that is in the Bible. Every one is necessary for the carrying out of His plan. How wonderful is the story of human development and of Divine revelation! There is progress from beginning to end. Faunce has summarized this beautifully in the following words: "The whole line of progress, not only in the events, but in the story of them, is especially remarkable. Not a single historical book can be spared from the Biblical collection. Certainly we need the Genesis; and the Exodus, with its central fact of the giving of the Sinaitic law, must not be omitted. And the details of that law as applied to civic and social conditions which are given in Leviticus, we could not spare. And this is fitly followed by Numbers, with its story of the forty years of the results of that legislation, and with the narrative of the wanderings and the entrance into Canaan. Deuteronomy, showing God's moral purposes in all that had preceded, occupies its appropriate place.

Joshua and Judges tell the political and social and religious history of the stormy time which compelled, at length, the establishment of the kingly rule of Saul and David and Solomon as told from different points of view in Kings and Samuel. These historical books are the background making intelligible the Psalmist's songs, the wisdom literature, and the prophecies that, if they touched immediate times, had for their ultimate object the heralding of the coming Christ. And the interdependence of the Old Testament and the New is abundantly shown in the book of the Hebrews. The Gospels give the Christian facts, the Acts show the facts applied, and the Epistles tell the results in the Christian churches to which they were directed. We have no chance collection of rags and tatters, unmethodical, unrelated, irresponsible. Alike in the Old Testament and in the New there is steady progress unto ultimate culmination. Using all the forms of literature known in its times, there is in every part of the volume the witness to one completed scheme, one pervasive thought, one distinct purpose; and there is absolute success in gaining one desired end. Thus the Bible comes to its grand culmination in the story of the Christ Himself, told in its outer narrative form in the four Gospels and in its inner form

of divine doctrinal meaning in apostolic Epistles, thus furnishing a volume to which, under penalty named in the book of Revelation, nothing can be added and from which nothing may be taken."

Thus we see that a supernatural mind has guided not only the development of His plan, but also the record of that development. Therefore it is not deemed necessary "to prove" the miracles recorded in the Bible. He who believes the Bible finds no difficulty in believing the miracles, whether they are recorded in the Old Testament or in the New. What we need to beware of is letting our intellect crowd out our heart when we read, and meditate upon, the Word of God.

If we allow ourselves to be led by the Spirit of our Creator, and believe implicitly in Him through whom we were created, all difficulties disappear and the way to the throne of our Father is open and clear.

"The Bible! the Bible! more precious than gold,
The hopes and the glories its pages unfold!
It speaks of a Saviour, and tells of His Love;
It shows us the way to the mansions above.
The Bible! the Bible! we hail it with joy,
Its truths and its glories our tongues shall
employ;
We'll sing of its triumphs, we'll tell of its worth,
And send its glad tidings afar o'er the earth."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following are among the books, works and authors that have been read or consulted in the preparation of "Inspiration—History, Theory and Fact,"

✓ *See p. 68* Introduction to the Study of the Gospels—
Westcott.

Horne's Introduction.

Hagenbach's History of Doctrine.

Schurer's History of the Jewish People.

Josephus, History of the Jews.

Dogmatik—Dr. C. E. Lindberg.

Doctrinal Theology—H. Schmid.

A Higher Catechism of Theology—Pope.

Plenary Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures—
Gaussen.

Revelation and Inspiration—Seeberg.

The Bible, Its Origin and Nature—Marcus
Dods.

How God Inspired the Bible—Smyth.

Verbal Inspiration—J. A. O. Stub.

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia.

Smith's Bible Dictionary.

Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Cyclo-
pedia—McClintock & Strong.

Encyclopedia Britannica.

Webster's New International Dictionary.
Theological Encyclopedia—R. F. Weidner.
Lange's Commentary.
Meyer's Commentary.
Bible Commentary — Jamison, Faussett,
Brown.
The Open Bible—O. M. Norlie.
Why is Christianity True?—Mullins.
The Mature Man's Difficulties with His Bible
—D. W. Faunce.
Textual Criticism—Hammond.
Difficulties in the Bible—R. A. Torrey.
Alleged Difficulties in Holy Scripture—Cath-
olic Truth Society.
The Fundamentals.
Recent articles by Liberals and Fundament-
alists.

7B
25
220.13

E68

Ericson, William Albert

Inspiration history,
theories and facts

DATE	ISSUED TO

220.13

E68

Bethel Seminary Library

3949 Bethel Drive

St. Paul, Minn. 55112

